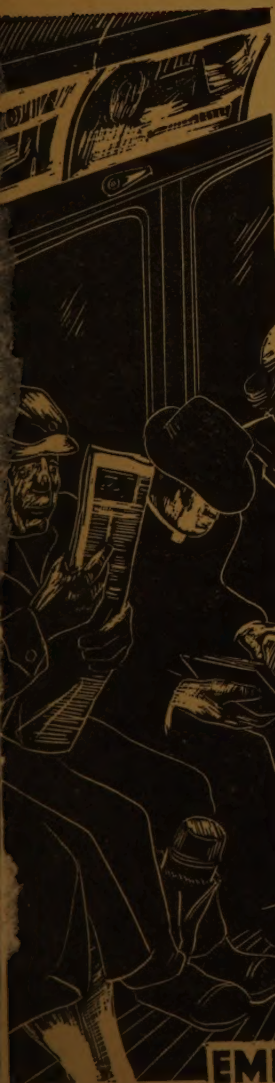


# INTEGRITY

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## Priests Among Men

by

EMMANUEL CARDINAL SUHARD

MARCH - APRIL, 1950

VOL. 4, NO. 6

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## PRIESTS AMONG MEN

By EMMANUEL CARDINAL SUHARD

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# PRIESTS AMONG MEN

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CARDINAL SUHARD

## *Beloved Brethren,*

Once again during Holy Week, while the whole mystery of salvation is being re-enacted for us, We invite you to cast a glance at the world. Look at it comprehensively. Take a profound view. We have not been wrong in our prognostications. A new world is in the making, forming even faster than We anticipated. The only thing that can be said for certain about it is that the world is being driven toward a general remolding of civilization.

Christians cannot look upon the ever-increasing number of modern inventions as accidental happenings or scientific curiosities. These discoveries are very significant. They have to be integrated into an apostolic vision of the world's redemption. For indeed they do not merely ornament the world but are actually building a new universe. And it is that very universe and no other that we are called upon to save.



## Uncertain Destiny

We say to save, for its salvation has not yet been effected. But neither is its salvation impossible. We Christians realize that the direction in which the world is moving is neither wholly good nor totally perverse. As realists we know that of itself the world tends neither toward a golden age nor toward nothingness. It contains within itself, just as the men who shape it, a mysterious duality: it is capable of grace or of sin. The world which is in the making may turn out to be the City of God or the City of Satan.

It is not a new dilemma. Ever since the Crucifixion, history has recurrently presented these fundamental alternatives. But this is the first time that they have been presented to men on a global scale, for the world has for the first time become a unity.

Who shall therefore lead the world out of this inherent dilemma? Who shall save the world from catastrophe and lead it to the unity of truth and love? Christ, for He is the sole Mediator. But Christ comes to us only in and by the Church which is a continuation of His life in time. That is why We told you two years ago that the salvation of the world is linked to the growth of the Church. The specific task of the Church is to effect a penetration of the world in extension and in depth so that nothing of it will remain unregenerated by grace.

However, this work of total consecration presupposes that the Church, while growing, keep a true understanding of God so as not to naturalize itself in endeavoring to supernaturalize profane things. At all costs the Church must remain what she is, transcendent and mysterious. This is a difficult task, but an exalted one. She has the negative duty of purging the world of atheism, the positive duty of fulfilling man's relentless desire for holiness, so evident in the torture humanity is experiencing because of the absence of God.

This is where the priest comes in. This is where he has to intervene, as an emissary from God above, to fulfill the yearning here below of an anguished mankind. He is always present in the Church; at all times, along with the Holy Ghost, he is the source of her permanence and of her life.

## The World and the Priesthood

Can it be that the whole world and the Church are dependent upon the priest? At first glance that seems preposterous! In the

face of the gigantic work ahead what can that man do who has neither arms nor money? He is a living recluse from normal community life, he dwells outside the ordinary field of thought and action. How laughable, or else, what an imposture! What weight has he with the proponents of atheism or even with the sincere protagonists of a future humanism? He is a disconcerting relic of a former age, a burdensome parasite in a society in which everyone works and builds; a second-rate citizen who should either be classed with the unfit or persecuted for his alleged plot to dominate the laboring classes for his own ends.

Attacked by his enemies, what is the priest to the Christians? He is loved and followed by a great number, but the respect in which many others hold him is often based unconsciously on ulterior motives. These latter consider him useful in supporting the established order, a symbol of stability in a society undergoing revolution. Many others have a secret worldly respect for the clergyman. As they are themselves absorbed in modern life, they look upon him as an instrument for the control of public opinion, and occasionally they blame him severely for being inefficient about it or for his outmoded faith. As it was for the Word coming into this world, so the priest is often ignored or misunderstood by his own: *Et sui eum non receperunt*.<sup>1</sup>

### The Mystery of the Priesthood

This symphony of criticism from various directions overwhelmingly points up the ridiculous disproportion between the end and the means by which it is to be obtained. Is it not sheer folly to entrust to such fragile hands the fate of the present and of the future? It is indeed so if the priest is no more than he appears to be. Those who challenge him, whether atheists or superficial believers, sin by a common ignorance. They behold the man, they gauge him as economists would; his hidden work, his invisible efficacy escape their perception. Of the priesthood they retain knowledge only of its derivatory functions or accidental characteristics; they fail to see its whole nature, to understand the mystery in which it is shrouded. It follows as a logical consequence of our prevalent atheism that our age has secularized, naturalized, and humanized the priest. If we are to find the true meaning of God again, we must rediscover the meaning of the priesthood; there will be no return to God without a return to the priest.



Therefore, Beloved Brethren, you will readily understand why the subject matter of this pastoral letter seems to Us a logical sequence to the other letters\* and an answer to the pressing need of the times.

Logical sequel, indeed. In order that "the growth of the Church," a prerequisite of universal redemption, take place without deviating from the true "meaning of God" a divine artisan is required: the priest.

And in order that the latter attain his full stature and fulfill his social mission it is indispensable that he be cleared in the face of his detractors, that he be re-evaluated by the faithful, and perhaps even in his own eyes. We shall do this by recalling to mind the infinite greatness of his powers and of his mission. By that very means it will become obvious that a priestless society is a dead society, a civilization which neither makes sense nor achieves anything.

\* \* \*

This pastoral letter, written with a fervor still lingering from the celebration of Our own priestly jubilee, is intended above all for Our beloved sons, the priests of the Paris diocese. Next it is meant for the religious. Since they share with the priests a common call to the service of the Lord, it is opportune to invite them to a more intimate understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Finally, it is addressed to all our faithful, to give them, or increase in them, an appreciation of the spiritual ideals of the priesthood.

Let it be made clear that the following pages, which are already too long, intend expressly to omit (notwithstanding Our reluctance to do so) an appreciable number of questions both theological and practical, relating to the priesthood. They will not consider even all the problems which concern the social mission of the priest.

In the first section We shall define what constitutes the essential and immutable nature of the priesthood. In the second section We shall indicate what the priestly mission implies in respect to the modern social order. Following that, a third section will outline a few of the mutual obligations of priest and community, which flow from the priest's eminent position among men.

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\* *Growth or Decline?* (Fides, South Bend) and *The Meaning of God* (Integrity).



## PART ONE

# The Eternal Priesthood

We must first of all clear up one point. Some hold that of the two concepts, priest and social order, it is the former which is subordinate to the latter. The usefulness of the priest to the men of a given time and place is said to be the criterion of his worth. From a very careful study of the needs of a people you could draw up the qualifications for their priest, a man regarded, as the dictionary defines him, as "the minister of a religion." There is no need to stress this point. Even educated and cultured people can be found who have only a very vague idea of what our priesthood really means. When they think of a priest they start with a vague generic definition and see in the Catholic priesthood only a particular case and example of an institution found in all social groups throughout history. Considered in this light a priest is only one functionary in the social order, its deputy before God. He receives his powers from below. He is only another human being.

This prevailing but false conception causes confusion and is the basis of all efforts to reduce priests to the status of the laity. If a priest is only a sort of reflection of society, there will be as many sorts of priests as there are civilizations. Likewise, if he takes his rise from superstitious or philosophical systems, there will be as many priesthoods as hypotheses. No, the priesthood cannot be regarded as an external function, as a passing and secondary role of someone merely delegated by his fellow-citizens. This would not be a priest but a man who takes on a religious function much as he would a public office. No wonder that so many Christians see the members of the hierarchy as mere func-



tionaries and consider the priesthood as just another profession, the highest one perhaps, but still only one among many.

### **Our Plan of Discussion**

We have to reverse the whole approach to the subject. The priesthood is not a derivatory function. It cannot be artificially constructed at our pleasure from the confusion and partial order of society. It is not a supererogation or a ritual garb. It changes the priest in his very essence. It is given from on high. It is unique, permanent, eternal. It must be accepted for what it is, not as something rising from experience but as both the original source and the fulfillment of all the imperfect foreshadowings of it found in the history of religions. This priesthood is the priesthood of Jesus Christ, Son of God. Being a priest in the social order is not a matter of inventing functions but of continuing by Christ's grace His unique priesthood in His Mystical Body which is the Church.

To be a priest means to perpetuate Christ just as He is, throughout time and space. It means to preserve Him unchanged, throughout the course of history, identical under the most diverse forms of social life, without subtracting anything from His priesthood, without adding anything to it, but not without making Christ perceptible and communicable. Here We have to make an important distinction, one that we have also made in regard to the Church. Just as there is in the Church a transcendent aspect which constitutes its mystery, and a contingent and temporal aspect which constitutes its successive incarnations, so is it also with the priest. He can be seen from the point of view of time or of eternity. To be a priest in the social order means to perpetuate the immutable and essential elements of Christ's priesthood, that is to say His mysterious meditation, under the constantly recurring aspects of time.

Leaving aside controverted questions, We should like to show from Scripture and Tradition what the priesthood is, what all priests have in common, that which unites all of them in Him and to each other, and consecrates them to Him; in a word, their participation in the unique Mediator.

### **I. The Priesthood of Christ**

If, Beloved Brethren, We speak to you of "Christ the Priest," you may spontaneously think of a new devotion, a new title conferred on Jesus Christ by mystical fervor as, for example, the Sacred Heart devotion. Most of you think of Christ as being,



among other things, a priest. This is not wrong, especially if sermons and spiritual books have familiarized you with the beautiful traditional formula: Christ is both Priest and Victim, *Sacerdos et Victima*. This point was emphasized when it was explained to you how the Sacrifice of the Mass is a renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Nothing could be more correct or praiseworthy. But on condition that the word priesthood is properly understood, not taken to mean something added to Christ or accidental to Him, as though He were first a man and then a priest. Christ was a priest not only in the Upper Room and on Calvary. He was a priest from the first instant of His mortal life, intrinsically so and in all of His acts. On this point I must insist, for on it rests this entire pastoral.

### 1. THE UNIQUE PRIEST

Christ did not only *fill the function* of a priest, He was Priest. He is, essentially, Priest.<sup>2</sup>

#### Love's Design

To understand the plan of love it is enough simply to recall the plan of the redemptive Incarnation.

"God is Love."<sup>3</sup> In order to raise us to His divine life, He created the world with man its king. Since man is an intelligent being and created in God's image, he is destined on behalf of himself and of all creatures to be the adorer of the infinite Being. But Adam accepted no other sovereign but himself; that is his sin. Relations are severed. The original order is destroyed. Who shall re-establish ties with the Creator? Man is incapable of doing so. But God "Who in a wonderful manner didst create everything. in His mercy wants to renew it still more wonderfully."<sup>4</sup> He decides to send His Son to men, as Pontiff, *Pontifex*, which can be translated as "the builder of bridges." He shall be their ferry, as it were, the passageway between God and men. Christ Himself acknowledges this explicitly: *Ego sum via*, I am the Way.<sup>5</sup> He is the only way, that is to say, the unique Mediator between creation and its Creator, and hence the sole Priest.

#### Priest by His Incarnation

This teaching has been magnificently supported by the whole of patristical and theological tradition. Both demonstrate that Christ's priesthood follows directly from His Incarnation, that is to say, as a result of the hypostatic union.

Saint Augustine puts it formally: "In that He is born of the Father, God is God, He is not a priest. He is Priest because of

the flesh which He assumed, because of the victim He received from us for the purpose of offering it."<sup>6</sup>

"Indeed, the Son of God is only a priest according to His human nature, for priesthood involves a real submission to God. However, human nature possesses in Him the sacerdotal dignity only because it subsists in the person of the Word, so that His priesthood holds its existence, its dignity, its power and its superiority from the hypostatic union. It belongs, in fact, to the human nature of Christ, as a sacerdotal consecration conferred upon Him at the very instant of the Incarnation in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and the indissolubility of the hypostatic union is the basis of the everlasting priesthood of Christ."<sup>7</sup> Although it will never end, Christ's priesthood however had a beginning in time. The Word, only Son of God, was not a priest before coming to us: "It was at the moment of His Incarnation that the Word made flesh became Priest: As long as he remains in the bosom of His Father He can neither abase Himself, worship, nor pray."<sup>8</sup>

### Priest by His Nature

The French school of spiritual writers has magnificently shed light on the "ontological" character of Christ's priestly consecration. It used the etymology of the word Christ, meaning anointed, to indicate that the consecrating unction which constituted Our Lord's ordination was neither virtual nor inferential but proceeded from His double nature: "The unction, by which Jesus Christ was consecrated Sovereign Priest, was the very divinity which filled and sanctified His sacred humanity at the very instant of the Incarnation just as balm or perfume permeates the paste with which it is mixed or as fire enters into a red-hot iron and penetrates it; or, finally, as the sun enters a crystal globe and makes it radiate with its splendor (the Fathers used these examples). In like manner, and according to the Apostle's testimony, *In ipso inhabitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis* (Colos. 2, 9), divinity is united to this humanity, dwells in it as in a permanent abode; it sanctifies it, consecrates it, and deifies it. So much so that Jesus is anointed and consecrated a priest forever (Heb. 7); that He is the first Christ and consequently the source of the grace and sanctity of priests, the sole and unique institutor of the priesthood in His Church."<sup>9</sup> Thus, "We must not then picture this priest as a chargé d'affaires deputed by the crowd: it is of Himself that He is priest. . . . His consecration is nothing other than His

personality, and His anointing, it is He: He is the anointed, He is the Christ of the Lord, because He is the Man-God."<sup>10</sup>

### **Vested from on High**

So there is an ontological interdependence (between Christ's Incarnation and priesthood) but beyond that, given the fact of the redemption and the whole economy that goes with it, there is even a necessary link between the two. One follows from the other. "The Word, Who at once perfectly reflects the Father and is the exemplar of creation, cannot, once He becomes incarnate, help but be the Mediator, the religious tie between God and man and, consequently, *the Priest*."<sup>11</sup> But it is not an iron necessity, as though the Father and the Son had to comply. On the contrary, both the One and the Other are expressly and freely the cause thereof. The Father, for having been pleased to send His Son into the world and having allowed Him to make Himself the Victim of our redemption; the Son, for having consented to it. The Epistle to the Hebrews has clearly described that investiture: "The purpose for which any high priest is chosen from among his fellow-men, and made a representative of men in their dealings with God, is to offer gifts and sacrifices in expiation of their sins. . . . His vocation comes from God, as Aaron's did; nobody can take on himself such a privilege as this. So it is with Christ. He did not raise Himself to the dignity of the high priesthood; it was God Who raised Him to it when He said 'Thou art my Son, I have begotten Thee this day,' and so, elsewhere, 'Thou art a priest forever, in the line of Melchisedech.'"<sup>12</sup>

This doctrine is emphasized by all commentators. "The priesthood, being a public function, legitimately belongs only to the one who is mandated by God, who receives official investiture from Him. Christ's priesthood is not an exception to that rule. The unique person of Christ ever hears the eternal words of the divine generation: 'Thou art my Son.' That divine decree simultaneously constitutes Him Mediator between God and men. Therein lies the metaphysical root of Christ's priesthood, its eternal foundation."<sup>13</sup>

In His turn, the Word is not the passive instrument of the divine will of His Father. Christ says, in coming into the world: "No sacrifice, no offering was Thy demand; Thou hast endowed me instead with a body. . . . See then, I said, I am coming to fulfill what is written of me . . . to do Thy will, O my God."<sup>14</sup> It is in full liberty and out of pure love that Christ makes Himself our brother and our ambassador.



Born in time, Jesus was, however, established from all eternity: *ante luciferum genui te*.<sup>15</sup>

That doctrine, Beloved Brethren, may seem quite abstract; however, as you shall see, it determines down to the most practical aspects the priest's mission in human society.

## 2. CORROLARIES

### One Priest Only: Christ

The first consequence: There are not several priesthoods, there is only one, that of Christ: "Others have had some participation of the priesthood: He has it in its entirety, or rather, He does not so much have it as be it. He is all the priesthood . . . Besides He is not a priest among priests, greater than the others or holier. He is the unique Priest . . . He exhausts in Himself . . . all priesthood."<sup>16</sup>

There are not, therefore, several kinds or degrees of priests, as if each one were a separate kind of priest. *The priesthood cannot be invented, it is.* It is not even, in a sense, something. It is someone: Christ.

Christ, Priest; two interchangeable titles. *Ipso facto* that priesthood is complete and perfect; no one can add anything to it.<sup>17</sup>

It is a permanent mediation, wrought upon earth on the Cross and consummated in Heaven where Christ "lives on still to make intercession on our behalf."<sup>18</sup>

### Messenger of Salvation Sent from on High

The second consequence: The priesthood does not proceed from below. The priesthood "is not a delegation from the people."<sup>19</sup> His mediation is not a bilateral contract whereby He imposes conditions on God. The priest is given from on high, just as He is, out of purely gratuitous love.

Inseparably bound to and resembling the redemptive Incarnation, the priesthood is a divine "mission," this word being construed with the deep meaning assigned to it in theology: the prolongation in the world of the eternal birth of the Word in the bosom of the Trinity.

The priest is therefore an envoy, a messenger, a plenipotentiary official of God to men. And here is the foundation of the apostolate, less by Christ's command than by His very Being: "I came upon an errand from my Father, and now I am sending you out in my turn."<sup>20</sup> "When God sent His Son into the world, it was not to reject the world, but so that the world might find salvation through Him."<sup>21</sup>

Priest and Savior, now one and the same, an identity of inestimable consequence.

### **Yet One of Us, Truly Our Representative**

Yet if that Priest Who is given us from above is to be our Mediator, He must not be a stranger to us. He must really be our representative, for every union presupposes two terms.

The Sovereign Priest fulfills these conditions: He is one of us. And not only one of those who knew Him, nor one of His countrymen; nor even one of those who are willing to receive Him. If He were but a legal delegate, He would be only the legate of the race or of the sect which bestowed a mandate upon Him. But He is ours by nature: by a "designation, not only verbal but real, proceeding from Christ's very constitution . . . composed of two natures in a single person . . . and, consequently, His sacrifice is a social one: it is the sacrifice which is solemnly offered by the whole of mankind . . . in its Head, in its nature."<sup>22</sup>

An equally important consequence: Christ is not only Mediator for the just, but for sinners, for all those who at least temporarily have neglected or even rejected His saving intervention by repeating the cry of the deicidal Jews: "We will not have this man for our king."<sup>23</sup>

We have not, as it were, called down Christ as Mediator by our sins, for His mission is greater and more extensive than that. The Sovereign Priest need not await a mandate from His brethren; He has by nature and officially the right of salvation over them. This is the unassailable basis of the priest's missionary obligation.

### **Priest by Status, as well as by Sacrifice**

If Christ is Mediator by the very fact of His birth, what becomes of Calvary? And what of the Cross and the Eucharist? All the foregoing, Beloved Brethren, might indeed leave you perplexed. Although it is the traditional doctrine of the Church, it does not suggest to you the theology which you have been taught. You have previously regarded the priesthood as bound to Christ's Passion: to Holy Thursday for its origin and institution in the Sacrament of Holy Orders; to Good Friday for the redeeming Sacrifice wherein Christ on Calvary was both Priest and Victim.

Need we assure you that there is no opposition between these two theologies, but rather a close harmony? The priesthood is usually commemorated on Holy Thursday. In reality its anniversary is also on Good Friday as well as on the Feast of the Annunciation, which commemorates the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Though it be true

that both these concepts form part of a sole and unique plan of love, *the priestly Sacrifice* and *the priestly Incarnation*, nevertheless they have two intellectually distinct aspects. The one and the other have given rise to two complementary and fruitful spiritual trends. The commentators of Saint Thomas and of the Council of Trent have associated the priesthood particularly with the Sacrifice of the Cross as continued in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>24</sup> Many of the Fathers, followed by the French scholars—Saint Vincent de Paul, Olier, Berulle, Bossuet, etc.—have preferred to emphasize the permanent and ontological character of Christ's sacerdotal mediation. You will readily appreciate that it is not our purpose to stir up a controversy but rather to unite two complementary realities. Once it has been clearly established that the Sacrifice of Calvary and the Eucharist which is its efficacious and lasting sacramental sign crown the sovereign pontificate of Christ, a revealed truth, is it not profitable to show that Christ "is Priest substantially, by everything that He is, by the Whole of Himself . . . that all of His actions are, necessarily, priestly?"<sup>25</sup> "Jesus is not Priest only in the Upper Room or on Calvary. He is so always because His priesthood is coincidental to the Incarnation itself. He exercises His mediating function without interruption. As a life-giving and substantial Sacrament He is Priest also in all His relations with God and with man."<sup>26</sup>

Here again there are tremendous consequences for the delineation of the priest's mission in the social order. We must not consider the priest to be only "the man in the Upper Room," of the Holy Eucharist and its complementary Sacraments. He is not to be merely the minister of worship; his priesthood is not limited to ritual nor is his ministry exclusively sacramental. In other words he will not be a priest only while performing, intermittently, acts for which he has received the power. He will remain a priest continuously, even invisibly, by all that he is. He will be so every hour of his life, in the most humble task as in the most solemn act. His ministry is not one of worship only, he is God's mouthpiece as well. He is to be a consecrator because he is consecrated, ever able and ever ready to sanctify what is human.

### **The Mediator, Synthesis of All Offices of Salvation**

Another consequence stems from the previous one. In the religion of Jesus "or in His Person at least . . . His Priesthood is all-embracing . . . He assumes simultaneously all the mediating



functions—which in His mysterious character cannot be dissociated from each other—the roles of Moses, Aaron, Abraham, Melchisedech.”<sup>27</sup> Because Christ is Mediator by all that He is, all the functions He exercised whether in His hidden life or during His public life are to find their place and be renewed in the life of the priest. He is to be spiritual director, pastor, preacher of the kingdom, benefactor of men, contemplative servant of the Father. Everything which flows from Christ’s role as Mediator ought to be present at least to some degree in His continuers, the priests throughout the world.

## II. The Mission of the Priest in the Church

Christ lives on in time. After His resurrection He did not confine His priesthood to a celestial “intercession on our behalf.”<sup>28</sup> He has willed to exercise His priesthood expressly here in the world and visibly.

But through whom? The answer is so obvious to you, Beloved Brethren, that you will spontaneously answer: Through the priest. You habitually think of the mystery of salvation in this simple pattern: God, Christ, the Apostles (that is to say the bishops and the priests), souls. The truth of the matter, however, is both richer and more complex.

### The Church, the Extension of Christ

We ought not to think of a priest as a kind of isolated being whom Christ individually and directly entrusts with the mission of prolonging Himself—*Sacerdos alter Christus*—one who uses his priestly powers according to his own discretion. A priest thus apart from the Church is inconceivable. Not only is he incorporated into the Mystical Body by his Baptism and consecrated by the Church’s Sacrament of Holy Orders, but his very power of mediation would be chimerical apart from the Church. For as we explained it two years ago it is the Church which prolongs and continues Christ here on earth. Just as He is the only Mediator so is she the *sole mediatrix*; and it is in this sense that we should understand the saying: Outside of the Church there is no salvation.

Since the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, she perpetuates Him entire. It is *by the whole of her being*, and therefore through all of her members, that she participates in Christ’s priestly mediation. Furthermore, to think of the priesthood as superfluous, as adding one more intermediary between the soul and God, does not make sense.

## 1. THE CONSECRATION OF BAPTISM

What follows is substantiated by Scripture and Tradition.

### A Priestly People

In the Old Testament we find mention of a "priestly nation."<sup>29</sup>

This prophecy is fulfilled; not only in Heaven as shown in the Apocalypse<sup>30</sup> but right here on earth, where Christians form "a spiritual temple, a holy priesthood" and constitute "a chosen race, a royal priesthood . . . a people set aside by God for Himself."<sup>31</sup>

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church have repeatedly referred to these texts and have applied them without hesitation to those who have been baptized.<sup>32</sup>

Their explanation is always the same: Baptism, in making us members of the Mystical Body of Christ, also joins us to His priesthood.

These assertions, Beloved Brethren, may completely upset your usual manner of thinking. For, as you may perhaps be saying to yourselves, if it is the whole of the Mystical Body which participates in Christ's priesthood, what becomes of the ministers of God? In what respect are they mediators if all Christians are so already? You would have the right to wonder if this doctrine meant that each Christian is individually a priest and that all are equally so. But that is a doctrine which has as a matter of fact been formally condemned by the Council of Trent.<sup>33</sup>

### The Baptismal Character

What the sacred authors and the Fathers intended to convey is that the baptized no longer belong to the profane world but are already consecrated persons, and that they therefore participate, although in a very humble degree, in the priesthood of the sole Priest.

Theology, and Saint Thomas in particular, gives a more systematic explanation of this. Three of the Sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, imprint on the soul a mark traditionally referred to as a "character." That mysterious impression, which is the distinctive sign of our belonging to God, assimilates, configures the soul, invisibly but nonetheless really, to the Sovereign Priest. Thus, as stated in the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, "By the waters of Baptism, as by common right, Christians are made members of the Mystical Body of Christ the Priest, and by the 'character' which is imprinted on their souls, they are appointed to give worship to God. Thus they participate, according to their condition, in the priesthood of Christ."<sup>34</sup>

## **Participation of the Baptized in the Worship of the Priest**

Each according to his own status: here is a major principle. Let no one suppose that the character of Baptism, the character of Confirmation, and the character of Holy Orders are merely three degrees of the same thing, a progressive accumulation of the same power. Their relation to one another is one of analogy; in other words, a more and more keen resemblance, a more and more real participation in the priesthood of the Word Incarnate. The baptismal character does not, therefore, imply the full idea of the priesthood, but one of a lesser sort; it cannot be simply enlarged, as it were, by Confirmation and Holy Orders, in the way that a statue can be reproduced in several sizes. The baptismal character is simply the character of membership, a mere entrée into divine worship. It is simply the right to be, and the fact of being, incorporated in Christ the Priest and a participation in His eternal mediation of worship and salvation. It is, besides the fact of union to the Savior through grace, the reason it can be said: "the Christian is another Christ." That consecration though real does not confer on the baptized the power of representing the Church but that of being represented. It does not give them the power of consecrating but only that of uniting themselves to the offering and of acquiescing to the consecration.

## **2. THE PRIMACY OF THE PRIEST IN THE CHURCH**

So, Beloved Brethren, it is now apparent to you how the priest fits into the Church. On the one hand, contrary to an all too prevalent opinion, he must not be set in opposition to the faithful as though the latter had nothing in common with him, as if they were as different from him as are the heathens. If it be true that he is consecrated, so can it be said of them, although in a different manner. Here we have a perspective in which the pastor appears particularly close to his flock and in which the dignity of the latter is set forth in its full magnitude. And one which also confers an apostolic obligation on the faithful. For, by that consecration which unites them to the Sovereign Priest, all the baptized must also participate in His mediation of salvation in regard to the whole of mankind.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, the priest is not merely a baptized person. He is not a lay person vested with a temporary function, but a man set apart from the faithful, endowed by God with transcendent powers and marked with a consecratory character which sets him apart, makes him at once pontiff and head in the community of



the baptized. Dogma, history and theology are unanimous in their teaching in this respect.

### *I. The Priest, Minister of the Holy Sacrifice*

The priest is distinct from the faithful primarily by virtue of the divine power conferred upon him by the Sacrament of Holy Orders,<sup>36</sup> namely: to baptize, remit sins, administer the Sacraments; but, principally, to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice by consecrating the Body of Christ. As Olier puts it, "Jesus Christ alone can do in the priest what the priest does every day in the Church."<sup>37</sup>

The assertion of that miraculous power is not a recent development of theology. Saint Paul bears witness to it when he exhorts Timothy not to neglect "the spiritual gift" which he received by "the imposition of the hands."<sup>38</sup> That power is closely related to the indelible character which we have already spoken about. What distinguishes the sacerdotal character from the character of the baptized and the confirmed is that the former bestows on the ministers thus vested the capacity of representing the sole Pontiff and acting in His name, in His stead.

From that power and "ontological" differentiation, which even sin does not take away—for priests are primarily ordained for the common welfare of the faithful—it follows that a priest is no longer merely consecrated, he is also a consecrator.

#### **Sole Consecrator**

And sole consecrator. For as the encyclical *Mediator Dei* says very precisely: "The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration, when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim, is performed by the priest and by him alone, as the representative of Christ and not as the representative of the faithful."<sup>39</sup>

The superior status of the priesthood is therefore indisputable.<sup>40</sup>

### *II. The Priest is Our Spiritual Head: The Hierarchy*

Since he is the only qualified minister of "worship in spirit and in truth," the priest has been considered right from the beginning as the *spiritual head* of the community. At no time was this society unorganized. The first preoccupation of the Apostles was to set up "Elders" (Presbyters) at the head of the churches. They were at once celebrants, as we have just shown, and "over-seers" (Bishops). The man of prayer, and the symbol and cause of the unity of the Church: these two functions of the priesthood do not parallel each other but merge in the one person of the priest.

## The Artisan of Organic Unity

The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* shows how the juridical and mystical characters of the Church are inseparable from each other, and this is also true of the priesthood under the New Law.<sup>41</sup> Just as it is in a natural body, *unity* is the *sine qua non* of the life of the Church. It isn't enough that the Church has a "Head" and "members"; they must also constitute an *organic* whole. That living unity is marvelously realized in the Church in an harmonious diversity of functions. Without the priesthood—which specially represents and perpetuates Christ, Head of her Body—the Church would not be a society, but a throng, an anarchy. However, the hierarchy is not merely concerned with maintaining order, especially not by coercive means. It is also the mysterious, although visible, instrument of the "physiological" operation of the Body and of its permanency.

In the Church, totally transcending in this regard temporal societies, it is Christ Himself who creates His Body and establishes a *community of love* by acting incessantly upon it, as its cohesive and vitalizing Principle, through His Spirit and by His Eucharist as well as by His continuation in His priests.

And here, Beloved Brethren, is what gives your priests a transcendent authority; far from being merely an honor it is a *power*, bestowed from above, as part of the mission of the Church. "With this power, and because of the great actions it permits them to perform, goes a pre-eminent position among the Christian people. The Sacrament of Holy Orders therefore provides them both with a duty and a rank . . . it organizes the Church."<sup>42</sup>

So the Church is not constructed through "immanence," but from on high. "Only to the Apostles, and thenceforth to those on whom their successors have imposed hands, is granted the power of the priesthood, in virtue of which they represent the person of Jesus Christ before their people, acting at the same time as representatives of their people before God. This priesthood is not transmitted to them by heredity or human descent. It does not emanate from the Christian community. It is not a delegation from the people. . . . That is why the visible, external priesthood of Jesus Christ . . . is conferred on designated men, through what may be called the spiritual generation of Holy Orders."<sup>43</sup>

Thus we can understand the directive of the Roman Pontificate that *sacerdotem oportet praeesse*, the priest must rule. Not only is he the first among all the faithful but he is one who has been sent and consecrated.

## The Source of the Church's Life

As head of the community the priest is not limited, as are earthly rulers, to the care of the common welfare, he has the even more important function, because of the powers he has received, of being the source of the life of the Church.<sup>44</sup>

That role is particularly obvious with regard to the Eucharist of which the priest is the exclusive consecrator.<sup>45</sup> It also shows itself in the other Sacraments which are either reserved to him or usually entrusted to him, as well as in all his pastoral and doctrinal ministry, as we shall see later on.

The gifts of grace we therefore receive through the priest. Yet there is more to it than that. In a certain sense it can be said that the priesthood is the source of the very being of the Church, in that it perpetuates in her the Sacraments and Christ's Sacrifice. At each instant of time the Church is being begotten at once by the Holy Ghost and by the priesthood which continues Christ, Head of her Body. Reciprocally, one may say that the priesthood, at the same time that it is the source of life in the Church, is also being begotten by the Church. For the Church, as the Spouse of Christ and Mother of all men, *Mater Ecclesia*, antecedes the priest; like the baptized (which they are also for that matter) priests are her sons.

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The foregoing has shown the priest's role in the Church. He is far from being a dispenser, on his own, of gifts from on high. The fullness of the priesthood rises from the very nature of the Church, by her power and in view of her mission.<sup>46</sup>

The priesthood and the Church are one sole and same legacy of love from Jesus Christ.

### III. The Priest and Christ

Now that We have appraised his position within the Church, the priest's relation to Christ must also be considered. Right away, Beloved Brethren, this question will occur to you: If there be only one Priest, Christ, how can there be other priests on earth?

#### Several Priests

The question is indeed pertinent. However, once again God's mercy provides the answer. Because He knows our humanity He realizes that we need tangible signs. And what signs can be more alive than human persons? That is why Our Lord, Whom only the inhabitants of Palestine two thousand years ago were privileged to see and touch,<sup>47</sup> wanted to continue Himself throughout space and time through priests, visible and like ourselves.



Moreover, in order that worship "in spirit and truth" be really the social worship of the whole of mankind, it needs to be expressed by external and public rites. That is the twofold reason why Christ elected to use human auxiliaries.

### **One Priest Only**

Called, delegated by Our Lord, His continuers on earth do not therefore constitute a number of distinct and autonomous priesthoods. They have no consistency of their own, nor do they add anything to Christ. For "those other priests, it is plain, are necessary, not because of any imperfection in Him, but because of our indigence. And it is His own superabundance which renders them possible. Precisely because He is Priest in a unique manner, without parallel, transcendent, He is Priest in a universal, mystic, overflowing manner: '*fons totius sacerdotii*,'<sup>48</sup> as Saint Thomas says: '*catholicus sacerdos*,'<sup>49</sup> as Tertullian expressed it."<sup>50</sup>

To show the relationship of human priests to the Sovereign Priest, Saint Paul resorts to a formula which indicates at once their nature and their function. Let them be looked upon, says he, as "ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."<sup>51</sup> That formula, which Pius XI used in his encyclical on the priesthood,<sup>52</sup> shows at once the priest's indigence with respect to Christ and his mysterious elevation with respect to men.

#### **1. THE INDIGENCE OF THE PRIEST**

By way of reaction against heresies about the priest, which considered him merely a powerless juridical appointee, certain effusive statements have been made which might almost suggest that the priest is identified with Christ, that he is Christ Himself. Need We tell you, Beloved Brethren, that such errors result from confused thinking? The Sacrament of Holy Orders deprives the priest of neither his nature nor his person. The traditional formula, the priest is another Christ, so legitimate when properly understood, must not evolve into pantheism.

Christ alone is the God-man. He alone, consequently, is intrinsically priest. The priest is but the man of God; he perpetuates, really, the presence of Jesus Christ.<sup>53</sup> His priesthood is not essentially united to his person; it is a priesthood by participation. The priest requires God's investiture in order to operate.

But among these operations a distinction must be made.

#### **The Priest as Minister of the Sacraments**

When he administers the Sacraments, that is to say as regards his power of Holy Orders, the teaching of the Church has never varied. "The priest," writes Pius XI, "is minister of Christ, an instrument, so to speak, in the hands of the Divine Redeemer."<sup>54</sup>

In that capacity his role is therefore one of complete self-effacement. He no longer acts in his own name; it is Christ Who acts in him. Saint Augustine long ago stated this about Baptism: "Be it Peter who baptizes, it is Jesus Who baptizes; be it Paul who baptizes, it is Jesus Who baptizes; be it Judas who baptizes, it is Jesus Who baptizes."<sup>55</sup> This instrumental role is more evident still in the Sacrament of Penance and, more specially so, in that of the Eucharist. The priest does not say, "May God forgive thee," but "I absolve thee"; nor, "This is the Body and the Blood of Christ," but "This is my Body, this is my Blood." "Whose words are they at the consecration? asks an author who was a contemporary of Saint Ambrose. Of the Lord Jesus . . . It is the word of Christ which performs these mysteries."<sup>56</sup>

### **The Instrument of Christ**

The efficacy of sacramental rites does not therefore depend on the minister. He may be a sinner or an ignorant man; the effects of the Sacrament are nevertheless integrally produced. For it is to the very letter an act of Christ. "The ordained priests . . . only lend their hands and their lips and however unworthy they . . . may be, the grace which comes through them is neither less immaculate nor less august. It is Another, the Priest, Who acts through them; their power, in the acts which they perform in His name, is equal to His, and their Baptisms, their absolutions, their consecrations have the same worth as His, because in reality they are His."<sup>57</sup>

As the instrument of Christ, but distinct from Him, a priest must not, however, be thought of as a material and passive instrument. He is an animated and rational instrument. Whence, out of respect for the dignity of the minister and of souls, God has willed it that the validity of the Sacraments depends on the intention of those who confer them. But this implies in the ministers only the will to act according to the wishes of Christ and the Church.

### **The Priest as Shepherd and Teacher**

When he acts in the capacity of spiritual head and pastor of the faithful, that is to say, as regards his power of jurisdiction and teaching,<sup>58</sup> the situation is not quite the same. God provides, in the exercise of that capacity, a real place for the moral qualities and natural gifts of the minister. Whenever he preaches, whenever he gives spiritual direction, he involves Christ in that he speaks in His name and is His messenger, His witness; but he does not for all of that efface himself before Christ to the point of being a pure instrument. In the exercise of the sacramental power,

one may speak of Christ as substituting Himself for His ministers. Here, one should rather speak of cooperation. The priest's human acts, in cooperation with grace, operate to influence and convert the faithful. The same applies to priestly participation in the government of the Church.<sup>59</sup> When priests make decisions they can make mistakes; they can administer their parishes or their dioceses more or less well. Their ignorance or errors will adversely affect the results of the message they transmit; their sanctity, on the other hand, will prompt souls to abide by it. However, it is evident that even in all these acts which are performed by virtue of their power of jurisdiction, the priests play but a modest role in the work of salvation, the principal agency of which is God's grace.

Their mediation is multiple and transitory, whereas Christ's is unique and eternal; they are sinners, whereas He is "holy, innocent and without blemish."<sup>60</sup> They are instruments or mere auxiliaries in the all-powerful hands of Christ. How destitute are priests here below in comparison with the Supreme Priest of the New Covenant.

## 2. THE GRANDEUR OF A PRIEST

The very thing which dwarfs priests when compared to Christ constitutes their grandeur in relation to other men. Because they do nothing by themselves, or only to the limit of their own power, they are strong with the very strength of God. We dare say it: "There is not less in our . . . poor sinful hands, when the words have been said over the bread and over the wine, than there was in His own hands . . . on the evening He instituted the Eucharist. Unheard of dignity of the Christian priesthood! It has Jesus Christ and it gives Him . . . more still, it is Jesus Christ Who gives Himself . . . with a donation which never ceases."<sup>61</sup>

### **Consecrated and Consecrator**

Though the priesthood is not intrinsically united to the priest's person, it is nevertheless, by virtue of a free arrangement by God, part of his very being. It is not an official vestment, it is a permanent disposition, the brand of a possession and of a mission: "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech."<sup>62</sup> The meaning of the character is evident here also. That seal, which neither death, nor sin nor heresy obliterates, is not a superficial mark; it is a transforming reality which consecrates the priest's very being and makes him consecrator. It is true that this extraordinary faculty which uses the powers of the human soul without destroying them is not constantly operative. Yet it remains ever capable of operation. For as Father Bourcoing says,



"The priest is clothed with the very person of Christ." Also, he has the unparalleled responsibility of using this permanently enduring capacity according as he elects to do so.

Beloved Brethren, you ought now to realize more clearly the incomparable dignity of a priest; all the sacerdotal power of Christ is, as it were, at his discretion. He is a conscious and free minister, and it depends on him whether the eternal mediation of the Savior reaches the souls of his fellow-men or not; it also is up to him whether the world pays God the homage which is due Him, for he has the unique privilege of being able to renew the Sacrifice of the Cross here on earth. In his hands rests the whole redemption, the entire Church.

\* \* \*

He is the minister of Christ, the dispenser of the divine mysteries. Those titles indicate clearly enough that the priest is, simultaneously and inseparably, the priest of Christ and the priest of the Church. His priesthood, which is a participation in that of the sole Priest, is also ordained to the sanctification of the faithful. Because he prolongs the Sovereign Priest in all that He is—the priest being indeed another Christ—the priest in this world will reflect in his being and in his ministry something of the mystery of the unique Priest. In other words, he will not only perform the Holy Sacrifice, he will be a priest like Christ, that is to say, in a permanent manner: a priest in all his acts, a priest by status. Like Christ also, and by virtue of a mission received from Him, the priest will combine in his person the prerogatives and the functions which are traditionally attributed to the Word Incarnate: Pontiff, King, Prophet. That is to say, he shall have to "offer," "preside," "teach."<sup>63</sup>

But these ministries, while it is useful to distinguish and define them, merge in their turn into one function which comprehends them all, that of mediator.

This conclusion, Beloved Brethren, is not an artificial one. As We have said at the beginning, it is deduced from the Incarnation of the Word. It also follows no less strictly from the nature of the Church as the extension of the sole Priest. From here we can now go on and deduce, without being at all arbitrary, the essential elements of the priest's role in the social order.

That will not consist, We repeat, in inventing or in *choosing* in respect to the priesthood such aspects as might seem most useful to our contemporaries. It will consist, for all priests, no matter where they are or in what age, in being faithfully what Christ was, mediators of men's salvation.



## PART TWO

# The Priest in the Social Order

"The office proper to a priest," writes Saint Thomas, "is to be a mediator between God and the people: to wit, inasmuch as he bestows divine things on the people." And, speaking of Christ a little further on, he specifies that "It belongs to Him, as man, to unite men to God, by communicating to men both precepts and gifts, and by offering satisfaction and prayers to God for men."<sup>64</sup>

The reality which this word mediator expresses seems simple. However, it gives rise to certain misconceptions which must be dealt with immediately.

### The Mediator

When we say that the priest is the mediator between God and man, some people imagine a sort of Jacob's ladder having three steps: at the top is God, at the bottom is mankind, and in the middle between them is their common representative, the priest. This picture is correct in that it includes two extremes and one mean term by which they are united. But it is inexact and dangerously so when it places the priest "midway" between God and man as though he were, in the hierarchy of beings, a separate being, neither God nor man.

### *Priests Are Not Angels*

The first error we meet, *angelism*, is partly due to mere eloquence. In a laudable effort to stress the dignity of the priest he is sometimes raised to the level of the immaterial beings who worship and serve God, and considered something like a guardian angel of his brethren. In other words the priest, like an angel, is considered as intermediate between mankind and God.

Beloved Brethren, We cannot emphasize too strongly the error and danger of such a view. The priest is not an angel. In the first place, not by his nature, for an angel is a pure spirit who enjoys the Beatific Vision and is immune from sin, which he has rejected once for all. The priest is a man like other men, composed of soul and body. He experiences hunger, weariness and the burden of age. He even, alas, knows the sting of sin<sup>65</sup> and though one may rightly speak of his sanctity, it is with reference to a sanctity in the making; a striving for sanctity, virtue in combat.

### **Their Respective Functions**

The priest and the angel also differ in their respective roles. It is true that both are worshippers and servants of God and that both are delegated to help men. But, whereas the angel is a temporary messenger limited to an occasion task,<sup>66</sup> the priest is charged with a continuous mission which is inherent in his priesthood: he is in a permanent manner the two-way channel to God.

Scripture gives us proof of this. The heavenly messenger is endowed with miraculous powers. He guides and protects Tobias, he agitates the water in the pool of Siloe and imparts to it the power of healing, etc.<sup>67</sup> The priest's powers do not produce such extraordinary effects.<sup>68</sup> But they are overwhelmingly superior, for no angel can do what the priest does. The priest's power is the very power of Jesus Christ. One can readily understand the often-quoted saying, ascribed to Saint Francis of Assisi: "If I were to meet a priest and an angel, I would hail the angel and kneel down before the priest."

### **From Above and From Below**

But it is mainly by their origin that those two envoys are distinct from one another. The angel comes from elsewhere, from above, from God. He is an envoy from God's right hand, a legate *a latere*, who intervenes in our human activities in the name of his Lord and Master. We greet him with respect, with love, for his Lord is also ours; but not without a certain awe, for, even when that spirit of light is our custodian, he remains somewhat of a stranger to us. As for the priest, he also is a legate of God; he also comes from Him. However, though he be empowered from above, he is nevertheless drawn from our level. He is "extracted" from mankind. He comes from God, but he also comes from among us, is one of us, and remains with us. He does not descend from Heaven to earth like one assigned to the care of divine rites. Whenever he prays, it is all of us who



pray with him and this prayer is like a clamor, a great cry rising from the earth: *De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine.*<sup>69</sup> We do not need to tell him our affairs and our troubles; he knows them well, for they are his own.

The encyclical on the Mystical Body recalls this fact by quoting Saint Thomas: "Christ . . . did not take hold of the angels—to quote the Apostle—but of the seed of Abraham."<sup>70</sup> All the more reason why His minister should not seek to evade his own nature. To "angelize" the priest is not only to incur the fate predicted by Pascal which awaits him "who would be an angel . . ." It also radically prevents the priest from being the mediator for man. For men will never recognize as one of their own a disembodied spirit. Nor will he be acceptable to God either, Who will not recognize him as a son in the flesh of Adam, an adopted brother of His own Son. The prerequisite of representing humanity is to partake of humanity. No angelism, ancient or modern, can prevail against the Christian realism born of the Incarnation.

### *Nor are they Wonder Workers*

Neither is the priest a wonder worker. Nor should anyone expect him to work miracles in the human community. God has entrusted him with divine powers over His Eucharistic Body and over His Mystical Body the Church but not over material things. The priest is not a miracle man as though he were an intermediary god, the "demiurge" of old. And it is a blessing that he is not one! For all power is a temptation, to abuse by its possessor, to extravagant expectations by its subordinates.

It is not fantastic to suppose that the priest runs the risk of using his unparalleled powers of transubstantiation and administering the Sacraments for his own profit and sacrilegiously. He constantly has to guard against using his prodigious charisms for his own ends. He is tempted to use these very powers to control things and people. He must ever keep before his mind the second commandment of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain." This means in modern application that a priest must never use the powers of his priesthood to set up a clerical despotism nor to seek for himself honors and gifts proper to God only. It also means that a priest must not consider his duty done once he has validly pronounced the sacramental formulae. It is true, as we have said, that it is Christ and He alone Who makes them efficacious but the priest is not for that reason dispensed from his obligation to prepare the souls of the

faithful to receive grace. The faithful are not, and must never be considered, inert and passive subjects.

### **The Priesthood and Superstition**

We want especially to remind those who see the priest as a sort of magician, of their obligations. For they are particularly inclined to see the priest as a kind of presiding spirit, beneficent or maleficent, and to regard the Sacraments over which he has control as infallible charms. Ethnology as well as the history of religions clearly shows that such a perversion in the interpretation or exercise of the priestly function is far from unknown. Many primitive or so-called primitive societies have seen witchcraft practiced right alongside the priest or instead of him. Peter and Paul, as the Acts of the Apostles tell us, discerned and denounced a similar peril with respect to Simon the Magician.<sup>71</sup> And in our own times technological progress seems to have had the effect of unleashing superstition anew. It is marked by a passive credulity on the part of the ill-informed faithful. It shows itself in all too many non-Catholics in a vague fear and repulsion at the very sight of a priest.

### *Nor is the Priest a Superman*

Finally, as a corollary of the foregoing, the priest is certainly not a superman, the modern-type messias. Yet here again is an eternal temptation. The story of Prometheus, who wrested the fire of heaven from the gods, keeps recurring in history in one form or another. Our Lord met with it in the Jewish people whose foolish expectations led them to kill Him. They would not forgive Him for refusing to be their king in terms of this world. They wanted a conquering Messiah who would free them from the Roman yoke; Christ's answer was that "His kingdom is not of this world."<sup>72</sup>

### **The Desert Temptation**

Like Christ, the priest will experience the "temptation in the desert." The temptor will ask him, as he asked Christ, to turn "stones into bread" and will offer him the dominion of "all the kingdoms of the earth." Satan will insidiously try to persuade the priest that his very power obliges him to mold human history and therefore involve himself inevitably either in defense of the status quo or in promoting revolutionary causes. The priest will have to summon all his intelligence and detachment in order to remain deaf to such appeals, for their power of attraction will lie in the fact that they touch his sense of compassion. He will be told that it is not for himself but to safeguard culture, or for the

sake of the homeless and the hungry, that he must involve his reputation and position. People will look to him, because of his influence, as a shortcut to sufficiency, learning and security. It really is his duty, and his more than anyone else's, to obtain these things for the people. But not in this manner.

Jesus performed miracles to show that He was the Son of God. But He did not cure all the sick, feed all the hungry or raise everyone from the dead. The blind to whom He restored sight, and the deaf whom He made to hear, were only a handful of men as compared to the multitude of blind, deaf and crippled in His time and throughout history. How do you account for this? Was it lack of love? Who would dare say that of Him Who allowed Himself to be nailed to the Cross for us?

Christ did not miraculously destroy suffering, which came into the world through sin. Instead He took it upon Himself in order to transfigure it. He did not invoke His "divine status"<sup>73</sup> but humbly made Himself one of us; He wanted to take on human nature as it is, "leaving us His example that we might follow in His footsteps."<sup>74</sup> For He did not come to set up a new Garden of Eden but to lead mankind singly and collectively into the kingdom of God and His "marvelous light."<sup>75</sup> Christ is not a magician but a savior.

### **The Priesthood and Messianism**

The disciple is not above his Master. What Christ has not done, the priest shall not do either. Christ's transcendence must remain with the priest. The priest is a redeemer and not a temporal messias. Following the example of the Son of Man, he must always refuse to play the role of superman. He must not agree to naturalize his message, to reduce the world of God and His powers to the level of a humanism of progress or to a philosophy of human transcendency. This is a priceless reminder to an age which exalts the human intellect, the flesh and racism: "I teach you of Superman," cries Nietzsche, "Man must surpass himself . . . the world exists for the sake of Superman . . . God is dead! Now our only desire is that Superman will live."<sup>76</sup>



Angel, Wonder Worker, Superman; here are three counterfeits of the priest. They have this in common, that they either reduce the priest to only one element of his nature or they set him halfway between the two elements. But the priest is not a *hybrid*. Neither is he neutral, that is to say, in the etymological sense of that word, "neither one thing nor another." He is remote



from any colorless indifference. Rather he intensely partakes of both sides of his nature at the same time. Christ is Mediator because He is at once Man and God; "He first effected the junction between the finite and the infinite. . . . Priests, like Christ, reconcile in themselves, as two natures, God and man."<sup>77</sup> The priest must not limit himself to communicating God's gifts and word, nor to channelling the prayers of mankind, but he must *make his own the matter of their salvation* to the point of feeling the anguish of their redemption more keenly than they do.

### **The Man of Dual Calling**

And here lies the mystery of the priest. What he unites in himself is what tears him apart. At every moment of his life he must answer two callings and entirely satisfy each of them without ever sacrificing either. "Those two tendencies seem contradictory. They are at least opposed to one another and impart to one's nature a kind of violent and painful tension which can end only in death. The priesthood resembles martyrdom."<sup>78</sup>

Transcendent yet incarnate; here is that same fundamental dualism which (as We mentioned in Our previous Lenten pastorals) constitutes the mystery of the Church and the paradox of Christian humanism. In this instance, Scripture confirms its existence and necessity in a celebrated text which, since it defines the priest in his innermost nature—his role of mediator—will serve as a key-note to our brief essay on the functions of the priest in the social order.

"The purpose for which any high priest is chosen from among his fellow-men, and made a representative of men in their dealings with God, is to offer gifts and sacrifices in expiation of their sins. He is qualified for this by being able to feel for them when they are ignorant and make mistakes, since he, too, is all beset with humiliations, and, for that reason, must needs present sin-offerings for himself, just as he does for the people. His vocation comes from God, as Aaron's did; nobody can take on himself such a privilege as this."<sup>79</sup>

"Chosen from among his fellow-men, and made a representative of men in their dealings with God." There is the whole doctrine of the transcendency of the priest of which we spoke, but his separation and removal from other men is on their behalf: *pro hominibus constituitur*.

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A priest must be simultaneously a man of God and a man among men if he is to be the real mediator for human society. As We go on We shall indicate in turn, in respect to today's

world, where each of these two aspects of the priesthood comes in; and We shall conclude that it is in the Sacrifice of the Mass that they find their living synthesis and their most lofty reconciliation.

## I. The Man of God

"Taken from among men." How well these words express the priest's human origin! Yet at the same time they indicate that he has been separated from other men. "The power of the words of consecration make a priest awesome and venerable, segregating him from the general run of men by a special elevation. Yesterday he was still one of them, now he has suddenly become their shepherd and doctor, in charge of the sacred functions. He still looks the same but he is forever inwardly transformed by an invisible power and grace."<sup>80</sup>

### A Man Apart

As we have already said, a special character marks the soul of him whom God has chosen for Himself. By his consecration the priest becomes God's man, His thing, His property, His servant. Christ Himself testifies to it, "They do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world."<sup>81</sup> The Old Testament had already said why: "As now the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi, to carry the ark that bears record of his covenant, and to minister in his presence, and to impart blessing in his name, as they still do; that is why the Levites have no lands assigned to them like their brethren, the Lord thy God has promised them that he himself will be their portion."<sup>82</sup> There is not a single priest who doubts this. His first pledge, when he receives the first order on the path to the priesthood, the tonsure, is a spiritual testament: he renounces the world, he chooses God: *Dominus pars haereditatis meae*, it is the Lord I claim for my prize.<sup>83</sup> Thus he becomes a member of the clergy. "That word cleric," Saint Jerome wrote to Neopotian, "signifies both that he himself possesses God and that God becomes his proprietor."

### Dead to the World

Every Christian, by the fact of his baptismal consecration, is no longer of this world, in the sense in which Saint John uses the word. But a priest quits the world radically and by reason of his state in life, not (as We shall show) that he runs away from it or condemns society and human institutions, but he renounces them for himself personally. Thereafter he is to use the world "as though he used it not."<sup>84</sup>

Seen this way, a priest's relations with the world must be those of the dead with each other. "The world stands crucified to me, and I to the world."<sup>85</sup>

This voluntary detachment of the priest which shall last until death and be both his Calvary and his joy,<sup>86</sup> is a death leading to life; by foregoing everything he receives everything. He is brought into an intimacy with the divinity, he belongs to the branch of the family nearest to God: "I do not speak of you any more as my servants . . . I have called you my friends."<sup>87</sup> Notwithstanding his personal limitations, a priest's role is to be, by vocation, one with God. "God is my lot," the holy Curé of Ars used to say.

So obviously a priest's work is to concern himself with the things of God. "His office is not for human things, and things that pass away, however lofty and valuable these may seem; but for things divine and enduring."<sup>88</sup> The priest is the natural defender of God's interests. His whole life is specialized, directed to the promotion of God's kingdom. His ministry is primarily and chiefly orientated to God, even though the human aspect of it is the one habitually seen. When a priest sacrifices himself for souls, it is to win them to God. His apostolate is not mere philanthropy, it is absolutely God-centered. One can say of him, from an altogether new point of view, what Saint Paul says of the simple faithful, "Whatsoever he does," he does it "for the glory of God."<sup>89</sup>

### **The Man of Sinai**

This is where the priestly character comes in. In all that he does, in all that he is, whether consciously or not, the priest represents and involves his Lord and Master. He no longer is free, but bound for his whole life. Should he ever forget it, the judgment of men will not, for invincibly a priest is set apart, he belongs in the realm of sacred things. To the rank and file he is not a man like other men. Though he try, as is his right and duty, to make himself "a mortal man like others,"<sup>90</sup> he will ever remain different, and apart from them. Like Moses a priest is a man of Mt. Sinai. Like Moses, and even more so, the Lord has made him "strong and solitary." A priest has always to remember that. At the very moment when he is most active and in the thick of things, a part of him, his highest part, must remain on the mountain, lost in the clouds.<sup>91</sup> To the end of his life, indeed to the end of time, he is to be a man of mystery.



## 1. PROPHET

First of all a priest is God's prophet. Scripture and the Fathers insist on the fundamental dignity of the "ministry of preaching."<sup>92</sup> Saint Augustine goes so far as to say, "God's word is no less important than the Body of Christ." And Saint Gregory compares the preaching of the Gospel to childbirth: "He who is brother and sister of Christ by believing, becomes His mother by preaching; one may say, indeed, that he begets the Lord Whom he has infused into the heart of his hearer, and he becomes mother by his preaching if, through his speech, the love of the Lord is begotten in the soul of his neighbor."<sup>93</sup>

### Propagandists for God

Thus a priest distributes the Word, not only at the Eucharistic Table but every time he preaches the Gospel.

Therefore he must not remain deaf to Isaias' entreaty: "Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their wicked doings, and the house of Jacob their sins."<sup>94</sup> Whether it is welcomed or not he has to bring his fellow human beings the eternal and ever efficacious word of God. His voice must not be timid nor is he to make concessions nor tone his message down as do those who plead human causes. As the minister of the Word, a priest is not to behave "like the many who adulterate the Word of God." He shall "preach it . . . in Jesus Christ" in all its purity "just as it emanates from God."<sup>95</sup>

The prophet's first obligation is that he neither add nor subtract from the fullness of his message; what he has received from on high he must faithfully diffuse here below.

### Witness to the Truth

One of the priest's first services to the world is to tell it the truth. Amidst the streams of propaganda which rival each other for adherents, the priest's voice must cry out boldly and sternly so as to "bear witness to truth and to light."<sup>96</sup> Since "God has deemed him worthy of being entrusted with the Gospel," he will know how to speak so as "not to flatter men, but to please God Who scrutinizes hearts." His words will be "inspired neither by flattery, nor by cupidity, nor by the desire for human praise."<sup>97</sup> Whatever price he has to pay, however unwelcomed he is by those his voice reaches, he must, when necessary, dare to overthrow idols, denounce injustices and clash with established powers. He must remain within the prophetic tradition. His voice must bring to life again the awe-inspiring and heart-rending cries of the great

inspired ones of old. If there is one thing in the Old Covenant which the New Dispensation did not come to abolish, it is precisely that spiritual liberty, that right to speak in the name of the "Sole Truth." "There is no imprisoning the word of God."<sup>98</sup> It is not for nothing that the deacon, who is the official reader of the Gospel in church, receives the virtue of fortitude, for he knows to what he exposes himself when he opens in gatherings of men the Book which no other book resembles.

### **The Man Who Brings Unrest**

If Christ "thus makes of his ministers a burning fire"<sup>99</sup> it is in order "to spread fire"<sup>100</sup> on the earth. "I have not come to bring peace . . . but the sword."<sup>101</sup>

Like Christ, the priest brings mankind a priceless good, that of *worrying* it. He must be the "minister of restlessness," the dispenser of a new thirst and a new hunger. Like God, he calls "a famine upon the land."<sup>102</sup> Obviously this does not mean that a morbid fear should be visited upon souls which are already distraught by modern life. The unrest which the priest must spread is the fear of God, that torment for the infinite, which has brought forth such amazing outbursts from the mystics and thinkers of all times.

The revolt which the priest must advocate is the insurrection of consciences, the order which he comes to disturb is the apparent calm which covers up disorders and hatreds. Like the hero and the saint, the priest in human society is not a passive docile citizen, he is not of common calibre. His own way of being a good citizen is to be, in most sincere obedience to legitimate authority, eternally unsatisfied, not so as to upset social peace but so as to foster continually a higher goal for mankind. A paradoxical function; as prophet of the consummate *Being*, he reflects the supreme peace and stability thereof in passing civilizations. As prophet of the *living* God he rejects the calm which means death. He has to be the artisan of the future, of the new order that is developing within the souls of individual men, as well as in the stream of history. So it can be said without contradiction that his way of bringing about order is to start a ferment. His way of obeying the laws of men is to appeal unceasingly to the Law of God.

## **2. WITNESS**

A priest is even more a witness of Almighty God than he is His prophet. Not only is this not on his own initiative, it is as Christ's express envoy. "Behold, I establish thee a minister

and a witness."<sup>103</sup> He is the living symbol of God, not merely by his words but by his very life.<sup>104</sup>

More precisely, the priest is the "Sacrament of Christ," that is to say, His efficacious sign among men.<sup>105</sup> It might even be said, in the sense in which We have been speaking, that the priest is "Jesus Christ among us," Jesus Christ "diffused and communicated."

A reflection, a sign, a proof, and a presence; all of these are realized in the person of the priest. Since he is consecrated to his fingertips, even his movements are and should be no longer secular. Everything he touches is, as it were, exorcised and blessed. By everything that he does or is he must convey the sense of sacredness. His very presence posits the existence of an order of invisible and superhuman values to a world which does not understand, or fights against the evidence. He makes the infinity of God tangible, as it were, reflecting the mystery of it in his own person.

First of all he does it by his prayer. For the faithful and unbelievers alike know him for this. In fact in many languages a missionary is called "the man of prayer." His prayer rises to God to offer Him the substantial adoration of men. It comes mercifully down to men again to distribute grace and pardon. Further on We shall deal more fully with this central function, in respect to the Mass.

Even when he does not speak to God about his brethren, or to them about God, the priest still is a *living symbol*. Even in his very flesh the folly of the Cross is realized. Obedience, chastity, poverty; whether or not a priest has made these three vows (depending on whether he is a secular or religious priest) he fulfills them daily. It is through the practice of these virtues which formerly astounded the pagans that the priest is permanently set apart from the world. We shall return to this subject later on. We merely want to show here that these virtues elevate the priest to a transcendent position, and especially to point out that this is their symbolic value.

### **Poverty and Obedience**

Through *poverty* first of all, the priest gives up money, thus defending monotheism against the idolatry of material goods. The very fact that he waives certain cultural and esthetic advantages or the means to efficiency which gold affords to the privileged, makes priestly poverty a *testimonial* to the providence of God and the Father Who can be trusted without reservation to look



after the future as well as to provide our daily bread. In imitation of Jesus Christ "Who had nowhere to lay His head,"<sup>106</sup> the priest by his detachment from material things, shows in a dignified way and silently that he rests totally on God and is always at the service of men.

*Obedience* re-enforces that testimony. The priest manifests his unwavering trust in the Holy Ghost as the guide and inspiration of the Mystical Body of Christ by his ready and wholehearted docility to the Church's precepts and suggestions as made known to him through Christ's vicar on earth and his own bishop. His humble and trustful submission is becoming to a free man and it also bears witness to the sovereign authority of God in an age of both unrestrained individualism and despotic totalitarianism. He shows that an order exists which is at once perfect in itself and yet attuned to our innermost nature, an order such as is seen nowhere in this world.

### **Chastity**

However, it is mainly through voluntary chastity that a priest bears witness. Ecclesiastical celibacy is ordinarily justified as consonant with the ministry of souls and the duties of the altar. *Imitamini quod tractatis*, says the Pontifical: "Be as virginal as the Immaculate Host which your consecrated hands touch." These reasons are very noble in themselves. It would seem, however, that they do not exhaust the full reality of the matter. Chastity is love and the expression of love, a love that is solicitous and encompassing for the "jealous God" Who has reserved to Himself a few of His sons, an exclusive love on the part of the "consecrated ones" for Him Who infinitely surpasses all created beauty and tenderness.<sup>107</sup> There is only one force in the world that is capable of overcoming love, another and stronger love. By renouncing human tenderness, a priest gives to souls not blinded by prejudice and even in the course of time to the others, evidence of the existence of an unparalleled treasure of happiness which he has sought and found. *Deus meus et omnia.*

### **Love and the Expression of Love**

So you see, Beloved Brethren, what a lofty thing priestly chastity is. It is not just an ascetical measure. It is not merely for the sake of apostolic efficiency. It is a token of the kingdom of the future, wherein God shall be all things to all. It anticipates a glorified mankind.<sup>108</sup> It is the sign of the *covenant* of love that unites men to God in mystical marriage. This is one of the things which a bishop's pastoral ring signifies. It is the meaning of

the ring nuns wear in token of their mystical espousal to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Priests like other men are imbued with a desire to "possess the earth," with joy in being free and with the need of loving. It is beyond the power of flesh and blood for them to give up their independence voluntarily, submit to another's will and be celibate. Just their being in the world where they are tempted from without and from within, yet are not faint-hearted nor weak nor insensitive while foregoing honors, joys and progeny, proves that here is something, as it were, miraculous. The most forcible lesson taught by the priest is that taught by his own life.

### 3. A SIGN OF CONTRADICTION

As a man who lives differently from others, who speaks with delegated royal authority, the priest is a challenge to other men. He is a *sign of contradiction*. As soon as he appears, passions crystallize, coalitions are formed. His presence suddenly releases pent-up feelings of aversion or of love. He is the touchstone of consciences.

First of all it is because he perplexes people. Mingling with others he resembles them in everything. Yet there is something in him which escapes them, a secret which daily proximity does not enable them to grasp. Although he is near them he nevertheless remains inaccessible; although completely open with them he remains mysterious. Seemingly he is understandable, yet all definitions fail when applied to him. He is adaptable, yet ever remains himself in a changing age; he mingles with his fellow-men yet is immalleable.

He is a strange man yet not a stranger. Whether men open or close their souls to him, he is still present to them, even in subtle ways, just as their conscience is always there or as the call of God is present to them. If anyone considers himself at peace or thinks he has done his share, the priest intrudes to upset his complacency. No matter how much a person dodges him, unfailingly they meet somewhere or other. Let someone suppose he is his own master or emancipated; along comes a priest to instill doubts or remind him of his obligations.

That is the reason why the priest in relation to society must always be somehow or other its adversary. He will never be forgiven for recalling and perpetuating, from generation to generation, Him Whom they thought they had suppressed forever. Like Christ, the priest is the cornerstone, the foundation block of the heavenly kingdom. Far from being a fatherly adviser or a

good-natured citizen, a priest is, like God, a terrible being.<sup>109</sup> He is a fighting man. Like Jacob, and until the dawn of the last day, he has to sustain against the Angel, the Angel of Darkness this time, a fight to the death in close quarters. Like Saint Michael, he challenges the Dragon, dragging him out of ambush by healing men's hearts, so as to crush one by one his ever resurgent heads. That is not a mere figure of speech. Although it is too frequently overlooked, a priest is an exorcist by virtue of one of the Orders he has received; he has the power and the duty of expelling the Devil.<sup>110</sup> "Let him do it," enjoins the Ritual, "with sovereign authority . . ."<sup>111</sup>

### **The Suffering Servant of Yahweh**

"But also," the same text continues, "with much faith, humility and fervor." These last words, Beloved Brethren, describe the nature of his battle. For though it is true that the priest is the hero of the human drama, a wrestler of gigantic stature, his weapons are neither the furor of the proud man nor natural courage, but the meekness of the Gospel and the folly of the Cross. Although he is a man who has refused to participate in the world's affairs in order to herald the kingdom of Heaven, he works by mildness and suffering, following the example of his King.

Attacked by "his enemy,"<sup>112</sup> men even hold it against their more worthy brother for telling them the truth. "Truth begets hatred," says Saint Augustine.<sup>113</sup> "If the world hates you, be sure that it hated me before it learned to hate you."<sup>114</sup> A priest must not, therefore, be astonished by lying accusations.<sup>115</sup> He will even see in them proof that he is following in Christ's footsteps.<sup>116</sup>

"If you belonged to the world, the world would know you for its own and love you; it is because you do not belong to the world, because I have singled you out from the midst of the world, that the world hates you. Do not forget what I said to you. No servant can be greater than his master. They will persecute you just as they have persecuted me."<sup>117</sup> Though obstinate in spiritual combat and uncompromising in the defense of those entrusted to him, when he is personally attacked Christ's minister demonstrates the tragic figure of "Yahweh's Servant" prophesied by Isaias and realized in Jesus Christ.

He is "despised and forsaken by men, a man of sorrows, . . . he is wronged and he submits, not protesting but like a lamb is led to the slaughter. . . ."<sup>118</sup> He holds his peace because he understands. He knows that his fellow-men "oppress the righteous man because he thwarts them in their ways."<sup>119</sup>



Above all he knows that redemption is entrusted to him primarily and that it cannot be achieved without the Cross. As a mediator then, following Christ, he has to offer himself up as an expiatory victim. "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows . . . he was bruised for our sins . . . and by his bruises we are healed."<sup>120</sup> Read over slowly, Beloved Brethren, this chapter of Isaias! See if you don't find it most dramatically and frequently corroborated by ancient and recent history.

In the human family then, the priesthood has, with a continuity which constitutes a justification in itself, filled and unfailingly exercised a new function, an office proper to itself, compared to which "there is no greater love":<sup>121</sup> the function of suffering persecution, the office of martyrdom.

### **The Artisan of Peace**

Since he is God's, the priest on earth belongs to no one. Whereas he is at the service of all men, strictly speaking he is not attached to any of them. He belongs to "the order of Melchisedech," whom he imitates in being, "without father, without mother, without genealogy."<sup>122</sup> He witnesses to the Father "Who makes His sun shine on the evil and equally on the good."<sup>123</sup> He is prisoner of no one; family, race, nation, none can lay claim to him. He is the "universal brother."<sup>124</sup> He belongs equally to everyone in his desire to reconcile them all in Jesus Christ. Thus it is that, without contradiction, he belongs to everyone precisely because he belongs to no one in particular. As he is the mediator between men and God so logically he is also a mediator among men. Even present-day popular feeling, a vestige of centuries of impregnation of consciences by the Gospel, is keenly conscious of the fact that God belongs to everyone. God is not partisan. So it is also with the priesthood. It is above classes, parties and divisions. This is important news for our modern world exasperated with so many dissensions. In the subconscious mind of the masses of men, notwithstanding their antagonism, there exists a "priesthood category," a common understanding which is vague but full of significance. They think of the priests as an asset they hold in common, a sort of joint inheritance which comes in handy at times of crisis or of joy, whether of the nation or of the individual man. That idea rests on reality. The priest really is, and must be, the artisan of peace in contemporary society, by constantly stressing our universal common destiny.

## Standard and Ideal

Artisan of peace and minister of restlessness, apocalyptic wrestler and suffering servant, the priest is a riddle in society. He is at once the "alike" and the "altogether-different," alternately a model for his brethren, *forma gregis ex animo*,<sup>125</sup> and a "scandal,"<sup>126</sup> incomprehensible. In a mysterious way he disconcerts society but thereby he also is its salvation. If he is not the standard for human nature it is because he is very much more than that. His way of being an example and a "measure" among men consists in being "measureless" and in transcending human limitations. Therefore the priest is of unequalled value to human society; by obliging it not to be content with self-complacency but to seek elsewhere in a more lofty city its own reason for being and its redemption. The priest's role is a strange one. He is of Heaven, without being in it. He belongs to human society precisely because he is not in it. Until the end of time his brothers will rise against him because of this inherent paradox; his title of citizenship will be challenged. To the very end however, that peerless "stranger" will be the salt counteracting the insipidity of the world, the force that will awaken it from its lethargy. The first function of the priesthood in human society is to save it from becoming self-contained. Its first duty is to remain transcendent. Human society will only be saved by becoming superhuman. It will only realize the fullness of the City of Man by becoming the City of God.

## II. The Man Among Men

"Taken from among men . . . the priest is ordained for the sake of men." This is a central truth. The priest is separated from his fellow-men in order to be their representative. He is the man of God in order to become the man among men. Without these two simultaneous roles he could not be a mediator. We must re-emphasize the fact that the priest's powers are not directed toward himself; they are "ordained" powers, that is, ordered to the redemption of the world. As a priest is bound to God so he is also bound to mankind.

## One of Them

The priest is a man and he must act as one.

He is a man by reason of his origin. As he comes from every social strata he has only to look to his own shortcomings and secret desires to appreciate the limitations and defects of every class of society. Furthermore, he knows "what is in man"<sup>127</sup> because he is made of body and soul; a difficult mixture in which the

soul only slowly becomes "ruler of the body which it animates." It cannot be said often enough, "He is like his fellow-men *in every way*." Like them he experiences hunger, fatigue, joy, discouragement. He too is subject to sickness and to death, to error and even to sin. But this is precisely his credential. "He can be compassionate toward those who sin through ignorance or error since he is himself compassed with infirmity."<sup>128</sup> Likewise he has "compassion for our failings, not in the way that fortunate people pity the unfortunate, but as the unfortunate pity each other through suffering a common misery."<sup>129</sup>

Throughout history, from the "Serving of the Tables"<sup>130</sup> to Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint John Bosco, the priesthood has never ceased to care for the suffering and the sinful with a special solicitude.

### **Eternal and Temporal Aspects**

Full participation in the lot of humanity entails another consequence: the priesthood has one face turned toward eternity, another toward the world. It is transcendent and beyond time, yet it is contingent and adaptable. Unchangeable in its essence, it varies according to its transitory forms. The priest who is spiritually branded with the divine coat of arms carries outward marks of his own age, environment and heredity. His clothes, speech, culture, past hardships, all distinguish him as belonging to certain centuries and countries. And rightly so! Otherwise we may fall into a double error, cited in a previous pastoral in respect to the Church, that of confusing the priesthood itself with the modes it takes in response to temporary conditions. This sometimes takes the form of "canonizing," in the name of a poorly understood tradition, some passing adaptation of priestly methods. This is what is called a pastoral "fixation." The opposite error is to sacrifice the essential function of mediation to the changing forms of ministry. This is evolutionism.

### **Duty of Adaptation**

To be a priest suited to the twentieth century is not a matter of slavishly copying methods suited to former times nor of inventing new forms for the sake of novelty, but it means to translate the message of Christianity into present-day terms. Briefly, a priest must adapt himself. It would be a grave mistake, one which is occasionally made, to suppose that this adaptation consists in servile *imitation* of contemporary customs. It is not because a priest uses the latest technical inventions or because he keeps up to date in his reading that he will *ipso facto* get his people to listen to



him. It is true that today more than ever before he is bound to be in the forefront of thought and culture. But if this knowledge does not proceed from, and if it is not accompanied by, a more profound understanding so that he can sympathize *from within* with the hardship and the hopes of his brethren, they will not acknowledge him as one of them.

You are now on your guard against a too literal conception of adaptation. Beware then of falling into the opposite and much more serious error which consists in holding that a priest, because he is all things to all men must never particularize himself, that is, that he must remain aloof from committing himself to human life. That would be the negation of Saint Paul's own principle, "With the Jews I lived like a Jew, to win the Jews; with those who keep the law, as one who keeps the law, to win those who kept the law."<sup>131</sup>

### **Renunciation and Acquisition**

These frequently quoted words define the double task incumbent upon the apostle in general and on the priest in particular; he must renounce some things and take on others. It means *renunciation* of those things which are peculiar to himself, his education, tastes, culture and even his native language. But also it means to *borrow* from those he wishes to evangelize. The essential things are to be given to them, the Gospel and the supernatural life. In turn he must take on certain of their characteristics, ways of understanding and of feeling previously unfamiliar. As the priest must be faithful in giving, so should he be docile in receiving. He must not think his message is compromised because it has been translated into a new language. Nor should he think he is violating his own nature by making himself acceptable to them. Just because a priest "is the sign of contradiction" he ought not to go about stirring up controversy. The opposition he will encounter as God's witness should not have its roots in any clerical inflexibility, nor any vindictive bitterness, nor obtuse sectarianism, all of which are as impotent as they are ridiculous. Far from creating a breach, the priest must rather do his utmost to break down the "wall of partition"<sup>132</sup> and make others see and love in him the true face of Christ.

### **The Priesthood and Sociology**

It is a fact, that wall is still standing. Yes, it is a long, thick rampart dividing into two closed camps the Church and temporal society. The first duty of the priesthood in our day is to recognize

this fact and to look the world in the face. It is a formidable sight!

The development of the Church probably for a long time to come depends on this stopping for a moment, this pause for silence and prayer. After fifty years of the priesthood, as on the very morning of his ordination, today's priest asks himself: In the face of that horizon blurred by the smoke of factories, in the face of universities and laboratories which produce as many problems as discoveries, what should he do? . . . Those workers that he encounters around the factory gate, how can he become like them, how can he become their brother?

Hundreds of priests have asked themselves that question. And many have already answered it. Salvation lies neither in methods nor techniques. Now is not a time for harvesting but for sowing and, in order to do that, therefore for understanding. A great work is beginning to take shape. Outlines for priestly action in the present order of society have already been drawn, though tentatively, on the basis of objective and inspired analytical studies. This pastoral letter, Beloved Brethren, will purposely, as you can understand, refrain from attempting a synthesis of the work that is going on. To do so prematurely would involve errors and necessitate constant revision. All that is needed is to avoid the mistake of throwing yourself into a new project without having taken care to understand it.

### **The Dividing Wall**

The truth of the matter, which too few people are willing to face, is that there exist, as it were, two "cities." Albert de Mun saw it even in his time. He used to say, "There is an abyss between the priest and the people, and that is the reason why Christian life no longer thrives in France." Without going so far as to say as he did (for happily the situation has changed) that our meetings and even our social activities "attract only converts," we can adopt that precursor's observation with respect to quite a number of our own efforts at Christianization that "close by those small fireside groups which are warmed by their own illusions, a whole people passes by, lives, works, suffers and struggles without knowing anything of what goes on, or is being said or is being taught in there."<sup>133</sup>

This condition is most obviously true in respect to the worker's world. The more manual his work is the more the worker is cut off from the Church. The Christian message seems completely alien to him. There still remains a real nostalgia for

the Gospel but the Church no longer appears to be anything but a political power, her actions seem to be tactics in her own self-interest. This same indifference which is flagrant among the workers is likewise felt at every step all the way up the social ladder. Vast numbers of people find their solace in quiet irreligion. They claim to find sufficient justification for their existence in a totally secular life. So also on the social plane you find a divorce between the two social structures. Formerly the parish and the civic community used to be called by the same name because they fully coincided. Today they are not coextensive in any way.

We are back where we started. Just as in the beginning, the Church now finds herself in a world which is partly pagan, but with this twofold difference. On the one hand, our present-day paganism is not like the former one, which was primitive but still religious, while ours has developed into an organized mystique, into an atheistic humanism. On the other hand the Church is no longer young. She has centuries of Christianity behind her. The awkwardness of the situation is at once apparent. The structure and methods of the Church are still suited, for the most part, to the life of a wholly Christian community. Our parishes, projects and institutions have not developed as rapidly as events and social groups, especially these last several decades. Nor, alas, have they moved in the same direction. They are turned inward, and not out toward the humanism which is in process of development. Present-day life has organized itself outside of Christianity; very many things that the moderns cherish are untouched by the faith. The current of life no longer flows through the Church. Things now go on as though Christianity were only concerned with a "fictitious world."

### **The Priesthood and the "Real World"**

The split applies even more to the priesthood. The sorrow and anguish of today's priests come from feeling that the "real world" exists and is taking shape without them, and that they are strangers to it. When they examine themselves they become aware of the fact that the greatest part of their ministry is devoted to the body of the faithful. Only with this difference, that the proportions have been inverted; whereas they should be seeking the multitude of stray sheep, it is in fact the lone remaining ewe that takes up the better part of their days.

Aside from the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Baptism, should the functions of the priesthood, that is the administering of the Sacraments, preaching, common prayer, parish activities, and catecheti-



cal teaching, be performed solely with respect to the Christian people? Are they only meant for the faithful? Formerly it was true that the only problem was to prepare people for, or bring them back to, the Sacraments. But today, with the world as secular as it is, does such pastoral activity attain its end?

In the face of such a transposition of circumstances, should not the methods be reversed? Should the sacramental emphasis be waived in favor of evangelization or, on the other hand, ought we to hold on to what we have and continue to sanctify those who are already baptized so as not to interrupt the worshipful homage owing to the glory of God and to save whatever we can? Briefly, should the priest of today be a minister of the Sacraments or an apostle? It is in this vein that priests are questioning themselves.

Without anticipating the answer to these questions, this at least can be said, that the first duty of a priest in the human community is to be obsessed with the idea of making his work fruitful.

Whatever the duty entrusted to him, in the Holy Ghost, by Holy Mother Church, every evening before God he should spread open again on his desk or on his poor table two maps of his parish and his neighborhood, and of the school and factory which fall within its borders. Patiently and fervently he should compare, point by point, his two "guiding plans." The old plan of the Church in the Christian community has its islands of influence, its strongholds, and its areas of habitual Christian practice. The other plan, of the new city, has its quick bridgeheads, its centers of spontaneous interest and its unexpected religious movements. Whether the priest be pastor, assistant, professor or a Catholic Action chaplain, he will know no rest until such time as the two plans run together, until they coincide to form but one "city" in truth and love.

This man who spends his days and nights planning, in the light of present-day society, the community of the future, no longer will it be said of him that he is not a part of the community. Men will no longer be able to challenge his being one of them. This "universal brother" of theirs has only left all things in order to be more fully present among them. God has taken him only to give him more, to surrender him unreservedly to all men without exception.

The priest has understood this investiture and has heard that call. Through his power and his whole life he will really be a savior, not only on the plane of the invisible kingdom but also at the heart of temporal civilizations.

## The Two Plans of Salvation

It is with respect to these two plans which overlap but are distinct from each other, that the priest must exercise his office of mediation. It is well to recall that the power of mediation is inconceivable outside of the Church. It can only be exercised, either by right or in fact, in her and through her. The priest is neither an autonomous nor an auxiliary mediator. It is the Church which is responsible for the salvation of mankind.

That implies two things: an eternal redemption and a temporal salvation. The former consists in causing men to be born again into the life proceeding from the Son of God, of incorporating them into the Mystical Body and in leading them, as a body, toward the "Parousia." It involves the beginning here on this earth of the kingdom of God. But while awaiting the heavenly Jerusalem mankind has a temporal destiny. Grouped into communities, whether national or otherwise, men strive to "possess the earth" and to develop civilizations. That is the vocation assigned to them in the Book of Genesis.<sup>134</sup> However, owing to original sin, mankind can succeed in carrying out its mission only if it is saved by Christ and animated by Christian charity and hope. These alone will keep men from using for their own destruction the very things that should be used to ennoble and liberate them.

Salvation in this double perspective is only possible through the Church which is the living extension of the only Mediator.

The Church in this capacity is indivisible. It is everything that she is, including the whole body of the redeemed and all those who participate in the priestly mediation of Christ. That means not only the hierarchy but also the priesthood and the faithful, inseparably united. These last, as His Holiness Pius XII has reminded us, "occupy the front ranks in the life of the Church; *through them the Church is the vital principle of human society.* Therefore the laity, and they especially, must have an ever more vivid consciousness not only of their belonging to the Church but of their *being the Church*, that is to say, that they are the community of the faithful here on earth under the leadership of their common Head, the Pope, and of the bishops in communion with him."<sup>135</sup>

The conclusion is obvious: the salvation of human society does not rest with the priest by himself but with and through the Christian people. Nevertheless he has, with regard to the people, a specific role which it behooves us here to be very precise about, and which varies according to the two redemptive missions which we have just differentiated.

## I. *The Priest and the People of God*

The essential purpose of the Church is to gather all men into her fold and unite them, in Christ, into a single family for the glory of God and their own eternal beatitude. Her primary mission therefore consists in preaching the Gospel to men of all races, tongues, nations, classes and civilizations, inviting them to participate through Baptism in the divine life which is in her.

The duty of this "witnessing" and preaching in its fullness is incumbent, through Christ's delegation, primarily on the Apostles and their successors the bishops, then on the priests, their "cooperators."<sup>136</sup> But as a consequence of their baptismal character and of their Confirmation all the faithful are called and fitted to fulfill this religious duty to humanity.<sup>137</sup>

### **The Priesthood and the Laity**

Although it is grounded in the Church's doctrine and tradition, the "participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy" has been consecrated and has received, as it were, a new realization in the definitions of Pius XI and Pius XII concerning Catholic Action.<sup>138</sup> Supporting texts abound but, Beloved Brethren, We must limit Ourselves to referring you to them since it is not Our purpose to deal directly with the problem of the laity but only to show that the mediation of the priest neither makes sense nor is complete save in association with and through the laity.<sup>139</sup>

All this applies even in the specifically supernatural realm of grace in respect to the extension of the kingdom of God. "This apostolic toil, done in the spirit of the Church," writes Pius XII, "consecrates, as it were, the layman and makes him a *minister of Christ* in the sense that Saint Augustine thus explains: When you hear, my brothers, Christ say, 'Where I am, there My minister is also,' take care not to think only of the guardians of the Church, the bishops and the clerics. You too, in your own way, are ministers of Christ, by living worthily . . . by preaching His name and His doctrine to those to whom you are able to do so. . . ."<sup>140</sup>

### **An Indivisible Apostolate**

The priest's apostolic task is now obvious. In the face of all the men who need to be saved he will not say "I" but "we"! The complete instrument of evangelization is neither the one who has simply been baptized nor the priest alone, but the Christian community. The basic cell, the measuring unit, of the apostolate is everywhere like a sort of "organic compound," the inseparable pair: **priesthood and laity.**<sup>141</sup>



Do not suppose, however, Beloved Brethren, that they are on the same plane. On the contrary, they are called to different realms and to complementary tasks.<sup>142</sup> We know this not so much from analysis as from Christ's will in the matter, the goodness and depth of which has been marvelously manifested throughout the history of Christianity. The priesthood, which is conferred from above, always appears as a *service*.<sup>143</sup> The priest is at the disposal of his brethren. Whether they are believers or unbelievers, they have a lien on him. And he has one on them. In a word, he is their head and he gives them life.

### 1. THE PRIEST AS HEAD OF THE COMMUNITY

The primacy of the priest over the faithful, which we have seen to be derived from his power of Orders and his power of jurisdiction,<sup>144</sup> is primarily a *function of mystical unity* ordained to the life of the Christian community. It is not at all to be exercised in a despotic manner but rather as an *efficacious leadership* which extends to all the religious activities of the people of God: divine service, the Sacraments, catechetical teaching, devotions, etc., "so that," as the Apostle states, "everything in the Church may be well ordered."<sup>145</sup>

"The Church can rely on the collaboration of the clergy and laity," writes His Holiness Pius XII, and the "supreme condition of all legitimate and fruitful collaboration with the hierarchical apostolate (is) filial subordination in regard to those who have been designated by the Holy Ghost to govern the Church of God."<sup>146</sup> Such was the last testament of Pius XI, "One thing which our already long experience has taught us, is that in all countries the fate of Catholic Action is in the hands of the clergy."<sup>147</sup>

#### The Head and Giver of Life

The authority that belongs to the hierarchy as head of the Body is also the life-giving principle of the Body.<sup>148</sup> The priest is neither the equal nor the delegate of the Christians! He is their *Father*. First of all, because he begets them into divine life through faith and Baptism of which he is the usual minister.<sup>149</sup> Having been their spiritual procreator, he thereafter nourishes his children until their death.<sup>150</sup> As dispenser of the mysteries of God<sup>151</sup> he constantly sustains them by giving them the Bread and the Word of which he is minister<sup>152</sup> and teacher.

Here again there is no opposition. The world will not be transformed without the laity, but there would be no laity without the priesthood. The right and duty of Christians is to be apostles.

But the right and primary role of the priest is to beget, form and watch over the militant laity. In that role the priest is irreplaceable. He is not merely an apostle; subject to the bishop, he is the apostle par excellence, an apostle according to his state in life. Moreover, he is head and leader of the Church's priestly mediation which belongs to him alone by his power and by his office, but in which all the faithful also participate.

### **A Minister or an Apostle**

Here our dilemma reappears, and now we can resolve it. It is always the same question. Is it not sinful to reserve all one's energy for the handful of the faithful, to devote one's life to a privileged minority when there is such a growing multitude of unbelievers? Should not vespers, religious processions, devotions and, even more, the administrative affairs of the parish, give way to the "ministry of preaching"?<sup>153</sup> The question at a deeper level is: Which has precedence, the sacramental celebrations or the spreading of the Gospel?

Christ's life, as well as the doctrine and practice of the Apostles, shows that these two functions are not mutually exclusive but complementary. If the Gospel is preached, it is so as to incorporate men into Christ's Mystical Body by Baptism. The Good News is the heralding of our salvation, of the Fatherhood of God, which implies two other truths: the pardon of our sins and the supernatural life. Since the apostle makes known and promises this life, he has to give it. How will he, unless it is through the Sacraments and ultimately through the Eucharistic Sacrifice? It alone, and the public prayers surrounding it, will enable the newly adopted members to worship "in spirit and in truth,"<sup>154</sup> to adore God in a fitting manner, attaining God across the chasm which only Christ can bridge. More important still, if the Word tends toward worship as its end it also finds its efficacy there. For the purpose of our preaching is to give the faith or make it grow. It is the pre-eminent divine work and requires its apostles to be intimately united with the genuine sources of grace.

### **Shepherd of the Faithful**

In order to be a shepherd a priest must be both a minister and an apostle. But to whom? Now the faithful themselves need both these things, the Gospel and the sacramental life. So priests being already overburdened because of their small numbers wonder if they should not choose either to confine themselves to the faithful or to devote themselves wholly to those outside the Church.

Both the definition of Catholic Action and experience with it solves the dilemma; not magically, because the supernatural doesn't operate that way, but as a light illuminating the way.

As the minister of Almighty God and as father of a community which, through him, must give the Lord the homage due Him, a priest is answerable for the souls of the people entrusted to him, whether they are "inside" the Church or "outside" it.

He belongs to all, equally and without distinction. He would therefore fail to grasp what the Church expects of him were he to consider that the unhappy circumstances of contemporary atheism authorized him to forsake the faithful. Progress will not be made among unbelievers by jeopardizing the faith, charity and moral life of believers, nor by allowing the apostolic generosity and spiritual energy of the faithful to dry up. The care of the baptized must not be considered as a secondary ministry nor, much less, as a necessary evil. On the contrary, it is the open passageway, the route predestined by grace for the masses of those separated from Christ to find their way into the Church.

For that reason a priest must devote all his efforts to the sanctification of Christians, by administering to them from the cradle to the grave the Sacraments of divine life, by visiting the sick, by preaching, by being solicitous for the beauty and intelligibility of the services, etc.

### **For Those Outside the Church**

However, though the Word of God is always the same, those who receive it differ. The charity by which all must live takes specific forms according to the duties of each one's state in life, for fathers and mothers of families, workmen, employees, technicians, or management executives. To sanctify them you have to help them discover their own vocations and fulfill the providential responsibilities which each entails.

As is obvious, this sort of formation will not only affect those who receive it, but is ordered also to those outside the Church. It is in this way that the traditional ministry ought to be renewed. In everything and everywhere it should be directed to making over believers and educating the faithful to be the *leaven of Christianity*. If they are guided by a sympathetic and realistic priest who meets them on their own level in order to raise them up little by little until they give themselves entirely, the faithful will effect a profound transformation of their own environments.



## 2. THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PRIEST'S DIRECT OPERATION

With this pastoral program, priests must be on their guard against excesses in two directions. First, lest they confine themselves to an indirect apostolate, as though their only prerogative, their only power, lay in forming militant lay people who alone would be witnesses to Christ in the paganized world. Such a systematic denial of the priest's power to bear witness himself before the world is a mere prejudice and should be treated as such. Conversely, the temptation will not be lacking to priests, considering how slowly and gradually a movement like Catholic Action gets under way, to try to do without Catholic Action, to by-pass the laity, and plunge themselves exclusively into the "direct apostolate." Such an attitude rests on a misconception of the role of the laity. They have their own special vocation, which is to live their ordinary lives in a thoroughly Christian manner, so witnessing to Christ. If a priest tries to carry out the apostolate single-handed, he also disregards the bond between himself and the community.

### The Indirect Apostolate and Direct Witness-Bearing

The above two criticisms apply only to a conception of the ministry which excludes or neglects the cooperation of the laity. The criticisms are not by any means aimed at certain forms of immediate contact which have in recent years seemingly been inspired by the Holy Ghost Himself.

The priest's role, always the same in its essence, can take on, and in fact, has in past ages, a variety of expressions and functions, to emphasize especially its regal character, or its power of prophecy, or its acts of worship. This is how it has happened that priests, more particularly bishops, have been at different times "paterfamilias," governors, defenders of the state, regents, judges, etc. In some cases they have usurped these offices unjustly, in other cases they have taken them on out of consideration for the people, where other responsible leadership was lacking. The role of the "priest-workman"\* is owing in part to contemporary historical conditions and in part to local needs.

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\* Editors' note: In France there are three types of parishes today. There is the traditional parish catering to the still Christian elements of the community. There is the "missionary parish" such as Abbé Michonneau's (described in *Revolution in a City Parish*, published last year by Blackfriars, Oxford, England) and there are a small number of priest-workmen who attend a special seminary at Lisieux and who afterwards take menial jobs, dress as workmen and live with and among the de-Christianized proletariat. They say their Mass in their own flats after work, with and for a handful of "new Christians" or catechumens who have been attracted to them. They do not necessarily intend to start new parishes. They have a special temporary function as the Cardinal is here explaining.

However, this role stems essentially from a profound need on the part of the priests to experience contemporary living conditions themselves in order to understand and to redeem the people. So it has come about that in certain circumstances, of which the hierarchy is the sole judge, the necessity of an intimate penetration into certain spheres which are cut off from the Church may opportunely warrant the consecration of priests *selected and trained* for this difficult mission. The highest authority of the Church recently endorsed it to the Capuchin Friars on the occasion of their General Chapter: "Present circumstances call for the exercise of the apostolate not only in the churches which are too often deserted by those who would benefit by the apostolate, but also on every occasion that priests have, as priests, to exercise their holy ministry, whether in the country, in workshops, factories, hospitals, or prisons. Whenever they are among workers, let them become as brothers to their brothers, so as to win them all to Christ. May they unite their apostolic sweat with the sweat of the workmen. Give yourselves up therefore to this apostolate . . . without sparing your labors. Penetrate to the heart of the masses as mediators of peace."<sup>155</sup>

### **Priest-Workmen**

In too many so-called Christian countries, France in particular, the Church, despite having many churches and priests, is no longer present to the majority of men. It is no longer possible for men to choose whether they will be for or against Christ. An enormous accumulation of prejudice has utterly distorted the face of the Church in their eyes. The priesthood is even less accessible to them. So it is fitting for priests to become witnesses again, not so much to convince people as to serve as a sign to them. It has been truly said, that to be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a *living mystery*. It means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist. To be a witness is much less a matter of external changes in one's way of living than of firm determination to establish a real community of destiny with the disinherited masses. The life of these priests is neither an escape nor a means of studying customs, nor even an attempt at conquest; it is a vocation of redemption. Work is not for them a pretext or an opportunity to propagandize; it is the priest's "naturalization papers" among people to whom he no longer is anything but an alien; it means to share the sufferings and penances of the human race. What we have already said

about the priest as the suffering servant of his Lord should be recalled in this connection.<sup>156</sup>

### **One Clergy Only**

But the priest in taking upon himself, by renouncing everything, the distress and aspirations of mankind is not dispensed, save in exceptional cases which only confirm the rule, from recruiting, forming and nurturing responsible laymen so that they may become leaven in their own environments.

There are not two clergies, the priest-workmen and the others. The priests who have taken on the full life of the workers should not be thought of as foreshadowing the priestly ministry of the future. But "neither are they free lancers, rather are they the vanguard of a clergy which is in its entirety moving forward. . . . So the Catholic Action laity, priest-workers who are not attached to parishes, and the new missionary parishes,<sup>157</sup> all three of these, then, seem to be necessary. *It is all part of the same effort of the Church to put herself on a missionary basis.* They ought not to seem in opposition to each other. For the fullest efficiency a Catholic-Action missionary laity requires a missionary clergy and missionary parishes. A missionary clergy or a missionary parish are inconceivable without a Catholic-Action missionary laity."<sup>158</sup>

So the normal way for a priest to operate with respect to the faithful is to have a complementary union of the two, with the priest as the father and the leader. The priest's missionary task will show the effects of this arrangement; it will not consist in the beginning of baptizing individuals but, in accordance with an often-quoted formula, in "planting the Church" right in the heart of the masses, in every social sphere.

### **Pastoral Theology and Spirituality**

Such a program presupposes an immense effort. In the first place, a mental effort. The Christianization of this new world calls for a real work of intellectual abnegation. It may take a long time to break away from certain "methods suited to medieval Christianity." We have, and we shall have, much hardship in breaking with a pattern which very legitimately for its own time was worked out by a theology which could only draw its inductions from a Christian state of affairs. So the most profound theological bases of the idea of the priesthood have to be re-examined and a new pattern of spirituality for priests worked out, through analysis and synthesis. We mean here only simply to state that this urgently needs doing. We have no intention of prematurely suggesting what the result will be.



Meanwhile we must *in practice* set up landmarks. Not in such a way as to harm or pervert the integrity of doctrine or the transcendent nature of the missionary work, nor to destroy what past wisdom has built and what experience has shown will be valuable forever or for a long time to come, nor to anticipate the decisions of the *magisterium* by confronting it with a *fait accompli*. But so as to inform the legitimate authority respectfully and objectively of the concrete reactions of the masses, to sift out the real needs from the passing enthusiasms of an age which swiftly makes its novelties obsolete; to make some prudent local sallies and wait for experience and authority to generalize about them. This type of action should go along with the action of the pastors forming them step by step. It is necessary to have a broad view, to make calculations on a large scale, but also to count, to verify details, to take into account objections, failures, deadlocks. You have to build something new before you tear the old down. Let us build, then, without waiting and out of provisional materials, rather than offer the faithful and unbelievers only plans for a future cathedral. Let us think, plan, love on the scale of the world, but let us also accept, in humble submission to reality, ties with the past and the inevitable shortcomings; such is the labor that awaits this and the next several generations of priests. On their clarity of thought, their prudence, and the scale on which they work, depends in large measure the presence of the Church in the world of tomorrow.

## II. *The Priest and the Temporal "City"*

Although he is an apostle and fosters the apostolate, the priest's responsibility is not confined to the salvation of souls.

In the first place, this is so because souls do not exist in isolation but rather in concrete human beings. Those whom he invites to the eternal kingdom live on earth for the time being, they are transients in a transitory world. Even if he did not wish to do so, the priest would have to reckon with the City of Man because he meets it everywhere, in his own self, since he is not an angelic emigrant; in others, who are reached by his message only through sense symbols. More important still, the City of God and the City of Man, although they are distinct and today all too frequently sorely at odds with each other, do not exist side by side but are all mixed up together.

### **The Role of the Church's Universality**

But does such an incorporation into the human order of things entail the necessity of saving it? The temporal order as



its very name suggests is not going to last forever. Does the Church which will go on forever owe it anything? The Church is supernatural; should she concern herself with the natural order? Do not men's efforts to subjugate the earth and to create civilizations necessitate a secular autonomy?

We have no intention of elaborating here the "theology of the temporal order"<sup>159</sup> or of proving again the legitimacy of Catholics' participation in the affairs of the City of Man, for we have previously prescribed it as an urgent duty for all Catholics. That right and that duty, more so for them than for other men, "of growing and possessing the earth"<sup>160</sup> has been repeatedly proclaimed by the papacy in recent years.<sup>161</sup>

Based essentially on the power which the Creator gave man over the whole of creation, it is also founded on the Catholicity of the Church. The Church's task is to baptize not only all men but also *the whole of man*, and *everything else through man*. It is the totality of mankind, down through history, in all its diverse manifestations, that the Church has to penetrate and win to Jesus Christ. Her mission is absolutely universal and nothing must remain alien to her. Thus did Saint Paul define her task: *instaurare omnia in Christo*.<sup>162</sup>

Now the question is whether or not this annexation of all things to the kingdom of God (which, while progressive, is total in its aspirations) means the suppression of the terrestrial realm or the confusion of the two orders.

### **Legitimate Autonomy**

The official teaching of the Church has been defined: there is to be neither a merging of the two powers nor their mutual interference. There exists an order of things for which man is legitimately responsible. Grace does not suppress nature. While she is too exalted to lower and demean herself, the Church also has too much respect for the human person to desire to absorb it in any kind of theocracy or to reduce men to the state of minors by virtual paternalism. Everyone will remember Leo XIII's distinction between the Church and the state, both "perfect societies." "God has divided the government of mankind between two powers: the ecclesiastical power and the civil power, the former assigned to divine things and the latter to human affairs. Each of them is sovereign by its nature; each is contained within limits that are perfectly defined and traceable in conformity with the nature and special end of each power. There exists, as it were, a

circumscribed sphere within which each exercises its action *jure proprio*."<sup>163</sup>

That principle, while not directly applicable to imperfect societies and other human efforts, can nevertheless be proportionately applied to all men's temporal activities on the sole condition that the order instituted by God is respected. "The Church does not intend siding against one or another of the concrete and particular forms set up by various peoples of countries to solve the gigantic problems of their interior organization as well as that of international cooperation, as long as their solutions respect the divine law."<sup>164</sup> The Church does not therefore ally herself to any particular scientific, social or political system; much less does she take over "in the technical realm, in respect of which she lacks the wherewithal and the competency."<sup>165</sup>

### **The Goal of the Temporal Order**

The fact that human society is free to set up its own organizations and techniques does not relieve the Church of her duty to redeem it. There is an ordering of transitory things which, while not destined to be continued in the future Jerusalem, calls for salvation here below. That on two accounts.

First, because of the close relationship that exists between the supernatural redemption of souls and the nature of society (for social institutions and the conditions of daily life mold the development of a person) they can contribute to his full growth or to his degradation. Because the Church is our Mother, she cannot remain indifferent to human factors on which depends in good measure the eternal happiness of those who are or will become her children.

But there is more to it than that. The things of earth themselves are called to a redemption; Christ the King has title to them. His universal empire extends beyond persons and demands the homage of all human institutions, of mankind as a whole and of the created universe.

### **1. THE VOCATION OF THE LAITY**

These are the two reasons why all Christians must resolutely participate in the life of the City of Man.<sup>166</sup> All must do it. That is, it is a duty they hold in common, but it is not an identical duty for every member of the Church. So here again the priest is beset with the question: What is, by contrast to the laity, his specific mission concerning earthly institutions and affairs?

It is not fitting for priests to run secular affairs. That is the duty of the laity. This is not a gratuitous statement; it is a necessity under the present circumstances, and it is also their right.

### **Being Present and the Duties of One's State**

The fact of the matter is that only the laity are present to the human city, because they live in it and are in continuous and immediate contact with its factories, houses and neighborhoods. But their irreplaceable role is not only, or mainly, on this account. It stems from their *vocation*. Placed by God at the head of a family or of some enterprise, or following a profession, they have the *vocational obligation* of bringing these things to their proper ends and of infusing a Christian spirit into them. It is an eminently constructive task which is their privilege and of which we have recently been reminded by the Sovereign Pontiff: "It is not by setting up a negative or merely defensive attitude to oppose erroneous theories of atheistic materialism and bad leaders that we may hope to solve the agonizing problems of the working world. It is by the active presence, in factories and stockyards, of pioneers fully conscious of their double vocation, as Christians and workers, who are resolved to assume fully their responsibilities and know neither respite nor rest until they have transformed their environments to conformity with the teachings of the Gospel. It is by such positive and collective work that the Church will be able to extend her life-giving action to millions of souls."<sup>187</sup>

### **Taking Over the Profane**

"To transform their environments," "double vocation as Christians and workers"; these words involve a whole program for the laity.

First of all, it is a professional and human vocation: to make improvements in hygienic and safety conditions, at work and in homes; to effect a better distribution of property and jobs; to promote art, culture and scientific research; none of these are secondary or optional activities for them and it is not an indifferent matter whether these human goals be attained. The true Christian will give himself entirely and without ulterior motives of religious proselytism, to those human tasks and to that fraternal mutual aid.

But there is a Christian job also. For, with a few exceptional cases, men are products of their environments. The most spiritual apostolate cannot ignore that humble but daily dependency. It is the splendid task of the laity to change their own environments into favorable atmospheres for disposing souls to receive and live the Christian message.

## The Salvation of Social Institutions

The duty of humanizing institutions and rendering the natural order receptive to grace has become an imperative obligation. Present-day society is characterized by a new and universal phenomenon: "socialization." The several community organizations of another day, guilds, cities, provinces, etc., have been succeeded by an inextricable network of collective influences and new social structures. Man is now much less alone in the face of his destiny, less alone to meditate about it, less able to desire and choose for himself. The social order of today is a complicated one. There are no more rugged individualists; each one belongs to a sphere which has its own customs, duties and mores. It is this highly organized society which the layman must face squarely. He may no longer content himself with humanizing and sanctifying individual lives; he owes it to himself to Christianize "social institutions" such as his neighborhood, his class, leisure activities, culture, the movies, the radio. For each of them constitutes both an area of living and a *reality* which is independent of the individuals of which it is made up or over whom it holds sway.

Take careful note of this. The salvation of persons cannot be accomplished without a certain "salvation" of the social order. While it is true that the social order exists for the persons, and not conversely,<sup>168</sup> one may nevertheless say that it is civilization itself which requires spiritualization, in all its problems and its movements, each of which constitutes, as it were, a collective reality. In particular, certain human groupings<sup>169</sup> such as villages, cities and the nation may be considered as "moral persons," transient of course, but capable nevertheless of being made subject to the divine law and to the reign of Christ the King.<sup>170</sup>

## The Laity are Irreplaceable

The laity have an irreplaceable work to do. They have their own witness to bear, their specific problems to solve and reforms to bring about, for all of which they are solely responsible. In giving them a free rein, the Church is not making expedient use of alternates, as though she were merely waiting the chance to re-entrust leadership of these temporal affairs to the priests when she has enough of them and public opinion becomes favorable. On the contrary, she intends, and without the least ulterior motive, to reserve to the laity full control of human society. It is for their formation as leaven that the Catholic Action of the specialized movements was expressly instituted.



Nevertheless the priest can be very much tempted to assume functions which are not his and for which the laity alone possess the grace of their state in life. He will have to overcome the temptation even if immediate efficiency is thereby diminished. For his specific role is in no wise to run the temporal order. There his competence ceases.

But not so his mission. For though it be true that he is normally debarred from the exercise of secular functions, upon him alone devolves the *inspiration* of Christian militant laity. In order to be effective lay action must proceed from the spirit of faith and a charity in action which necessitates enlightenment from Holy Scripture and dogma. Primarily "the strength required to accomplish that seemingly superhuman task will be found in a more and more intense practice of the sacramental and eucharistic life . . . in a loyal and generous adherence to the directives of the hierarchy . . . and in a fraternal and joyous collaboration with other movements of Catholic Action for the promotion of God's sovereignty over the whole of society."<sup>171</sup>

### **The Priest as the Spiritual Educator**

It is the priest, as head of the mystical unity, who is to be, as it were, the soul of this community and who will unite it to other Christian groups; it is he who will nurture the interior life of the apostles of the temporal order.

He can never spend too much of his time at it. It is not easy to form consciences. First of all, it is not a matter of making up principles but of taking the unchanging truths of revelation transmitted through infallible authority. But it does not mean making a mechanical deduction from them, producing a ready-made solution for a given case. There are no recipes for the constantly shifting and changing context of the problems. The priest's advice to his militants will have to follow, day by day, the inspirations of the Holy Ghost about what line of attack to use and how grace will be channelled. It is truly a "direction of consciences" which requires a respect for their freedom and necessitates, on the part of the priest, a deep knowledge of the social sphere he is trying to bring to life.

### **Self-effacement and Pastoral Mediation**

It is by being the soul and, as it were, the vital principle of the Christian community as it partakes of the whole of men's lives, that a priest truly is himself guiding society. He does it indirectly but nonetheless really. He stays in the background but only so as to be of greater service. A priest will fail in his vocation if he

confines his efforts to the salvation of persons, for he has not only souls for parishioners but also problems, organizations, and a given section of time and space in the city of this world. This holds true for all degrees of the hierarchy. Nor is the responsibility of each member of the hierarchy purely "horizontal," or geographical; it is, as it were, "vertical," and has duration. He who inherits a portion of the Church, a parish, or a college, etc., will be asked by future generations for a reckoning on the situation which he has prepared for them. And he will be judged on this basis. Therefore on the one hand clericalism in all its forms, that is to say all infringements of jurisdiction, should be ruthlessly repudiated, and on the other hand the collective salvation and human perfection of the social order are obligatory upon the priest.<sup>172</sup> On one condition however, that no attempt at reform be made from outside, as laws and constitutions are reformed, but that it be done from within by soliciting a deep adherence of free wills through the instrumentality of militant laity. So the example of Jesus will be followed; not even once in the Gospels do we find Christ busying Himself directly with questions touching civilization or progress. But He provided a leavening power for them by preaching and living the Beatitudes.

## 2. THE PRIEST'S PRIVILEGE

In addition to his role as educator of consciences, the priest has a unique privilege which abundantly compensates for his withdrawal from secular activities. He is the one who can give a meaning and a divine worth to the whole of human reality. Not that those simply baptized are utterly incapable of it; their Baptism which makes them participate in a certain way in the Church's priestly mediation gives them power to act as a ferment in the human dough, as the leaven of Christ. But their transformation of created things remain on the plane of their action, whereas the priest transforms things on the *ontological* plane, at the very root of being. His prerogative is expressed in two words which show, one positively and the other negatively, the same power he has over things: he *exorcises* and he *blesses*.

### *Exorcism*

When the title of exorcist is nowadays applied to the priest, Beloved Brethren, you spontaneously think of it as a faculty which was frequently used in former days but which is largely reserved to the missions now. It is true that the exercise of this jurisdiction over evil spirits is restricted by the bishop to a very small number of subjects and cases. Yet the statement of the Pontifical is formal:

*Exorcistam oportet abjicere daemones.* That injunction should not surprise twentieth century Christians any more than it did those in the ages of faith.

Texts abound in Holy Writ confirming the fact that sin committed at the instigation of the Serpent left Adam and his sons under the power of the Devil.<sup>173</sup> Satan is called by Our Lord "the prince of this world."<sup>174</sup> Under this title he offered Christ in the desert all the kingdoms of the earth "with their power and glory" which, he maintained, "were delivered to him and so he had the power to give them to whom he would."<sup>175</sup> Christ's victory is not only over sin, but over Satan.<sup>176</sup> Christian life demands "resisting in the firmness of the faith the adversary who goes about the world seeking whom he may devour."<sup>177</sup>

It would be as useless to multiply quotations as to draw a false conclusion from them, that of a manichean dualism. The Devil is not God's equal. He is His creature and has received from Him only the permission to tempt free man. But because he is "deceitful,"<sup>178</sup> he knows how to use the most diverse and effective means. Those he resorts to in our age of rationality and discovery are subtle. He no longer assumes human form as he did in simpler eras; he insinuates himself into the threshold of the mind that is thinking and into the movement of the hand which grasps and shapes. To a technical and naturalistic generation the fallen angel offers a countenance of intelligence, culture and progress. To a world in process of unification he holds out a unity which has a surface resemblance to that which Christ bequeathed us in His priestly prayer.<sup>179</sup>

The eternal temptation takes two principal forms today.

### **The Denial of God**

The denial of God is the most serious one, but the most easily discernible, even in its most insidious expressions. It is as old as mankind. It perpetuates Lucifer's refusal to serve God and Adam's naive presumption. It can even be likened to the Promethean feat and, to take a more recent instance, to the story of Faust. The universe is self-contained, man thinks he is self-sufficient. His autonomy in the temporal order, legitimate when it does not refuse to open itself to the action of grace, becomes blasphemous and anarchical when it transforms itself into an autarchy jealous of its own power.

This is not mere theory. The tremendous collective effort of mankind to improve the condition of humanity and make this world a happy place finds suddenly at its disposal, without having

had time to reflect about it, fabulous instruments for exploring and taking possession of not only the physical universe but mankind itself. The possibilities offered by recent biological and psychological techniques, of influencing the spiritual faculties by conditioning them, offer scientists and leaders of men a temptation all out of proportion with those of former days: the temptation to create a new Adam, without God's help.

It will be one of the great tasks of the priesthood in our age, in which the enthusiasm for *homo faber* criss-crosses with doctrines of despair, to safeguard society from the pagan optimism of the superman as well as from an equally destructive pessimism. His mediation in regard to temporal conditions taken as final ends should consist in reminding men, in season and out of season, that the earth is only a stopping place on the way to eternity and that they participate in being at a low rung on the scale. The priest must follow with sympathetic attention the evolution of material techniques and of the sciences of man, whether individual or social, so as to preclude the world's becoming a swarm of slaves, even satiated ones, over whose lives and minds a minority of omnipotent technicians will have domination. In his self-effacement he will be the primary instrument of bettering the condition of the humble and fostering the independence of the weak.

### **The Naturalization of Christianity**

It is not only to atheistic mystiques that the priesthood must apply its power of exorcism; it is to the efforts of the Christians themselves to transform and spiritualize the universe. He must purify them. For into that task which is, We repeat, a grave obligation for Catholics, may creep an insidious peril.

God's eternal design, according to the teaching of Saint Paul, is truly to "restore all things in Jesus Christ,"<sup>180</sup> "First-born of all creation,"<sup>181</sup> "in Whom all things subsist."<sup>182</sup> The Church did not limit the scope of that program. But it is necessary clearly to interpret what universal consecration means. Its goal is not the deification of human values for their own sake, for such would no longer be Christianity but pantheism: God immanent to things and the latter hence being self-sufficient. No doubt, and the Fathers frequently repeat it, "God made Himself man that man might become God." But if the Word assumed our flesh it is to draw it after Him, in His resurrection, into the "society of God."<sup>183</sup> The Fathers frequently emphasize that twofold movement of the Incarnation of the Word. He descended, assumed our human nature and with it, in it, made a solidarity of the whole of creation



with Himself; but thereafter He reascended to His Father with the whole of mankind, drawing in His wake, as it were, the whole of the created universe. If they are not careful, certain Christians will remember only the first phase of the Incarnation, that is, the transfiguration of all profane things, by virtue of Christ's descent to earth. But it can be seen how dangerous it would be if they thus stopped halfway; they would divinize the terrestrial state and thereby reduce the mystery of Christianity to a closed humanism. Probably most of them would not go so far as an idolatrous glorification of the goods of this earth. But the danger would remain of becoming too attached to them and, reversing the legitimate order, making earthly things the end rather than the means.

### **The Conversion of Humanism**

This seduction, so obviously proceeding from the Tempter, will accompany the Christian in all of his undertakings. He will often risk being lost by the very act by which he is attempting salvation. That is when the priest will have to intervene. His specific role will be to filter men's inspirations for fashioning and transforming the universe so as to purge their undertakings of all pride and covetousness.

He will always remember that, although temporal things have real values since they proceed from God Who "beheld that they were good"<sup>184</sup> and were redeemed in Christ, they ever remain by their nature fragmentary and transitory. They do not have the power to quench the infinite thirst of supernaturalized men. Moreover, the priest will see them as they exist concretely, in the context of sin. Every human being redeemed by grace has a warfare going on within himself between the "old Adam" and the "new man."<sup>185</sup> He can always yield to one or the other, as a sad consequence of the division in human nature original sin introduced into the world. And it is precisely because man is essentially "undetermined," capable either of grace or of sin, that the world is also, like him, "ambivalent,"<sup>186</sup> subject to failure or redemption. The world is the "ante" in a superhuman struggle that marks every moment of its evolution. Whoever wins can take it and order it to his own likeness.

The stakes are twice as grave now that prodigious technological advances are at work shaping a new world. The peril is no longer localized, it is universal; we lose all or save all. It can be said that the fate of the world is precisely in the hands of the Christians. But still more, it is in the hands of the priest for it

is he who, through the faithful, must guide the new world to stability.

As an exorcist he will know how to use his power of "discernment of spirits," how to "test all things and hold to that which is good,"<sup>187</sup> so as to leave to Satan that which is Satan's and to Christ that which He has ransomed. For the priest has by his duty and by grace of his state "power over evil spirits."<sup>188</sup> He will intuitively recognize and expel the covetousness and secret ambitions which forever tend to change the Gospel into a profitable messianism.

### Salvation through the Cross

The great task of the priesthood is to recall the fact that the world is sinful and that it needs to be redeemed; it is not, nor can it be, simply consecrated and restored without any preliminaries. It is not simply a matter of perfecting and extending temporal affairs while Christianizing them. They must also be purified, delivered from evil, orientated and opened unceasingly to eternal values. They must be ordered to charity which is the only reality which "shall not pass away"<sup>189</sup> for it is thus that Saint John defines the Divine Being: "God is Love."<sup>190</sup>

So the temporal order will not be saved except by being converted. Its only path will be the *via dolorosa* which Christ followed and which leads to the Cross. The supreme act of the salvation of this world which alone can complete and transfigure it is the Sacrifice of Calvary which is extended throughout time as the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Cross of salvation belongs to us too; we carry it with Christ. There will be no salvation of the temporal order without asceticism and penance, no access to grace without death to sin, no life without mortification. This is the great warning, the awful choice the priest brings to the world, whether or not to accept the Cross. It is in casting out the "old Adam," so that from the depths of the soul the eternal youth and baptismal splendor of the "new man" can rise up, that the priest will fashion the unification of society and raise up a superior kind of man.

Because he is the foe and conqueror of "man's worst enemy," he is of all men on earth God's best ally and the world's most useful citizen.

### Benediction

You will recall, Beloved Brethren, that the ceremony of Baptism of an adult<sup>191</sup> begins with a series of exorcisms. That is only the first phase. After the evil spirit has been cast out the priest

blesses the new Christian and invites him into the Church: "Enter into the holy Church to receive the heavenly blessing from Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ." <sup>192</sup>

Likewise, of course in a purely analogical sense, the "baptism" of society has to start with a kind of "exorcism." For according to Saint Paul's expression it also is "subject to vanity . . . in the servitude of corruption." <sup>193</sup> It needs a "re-entrance into grace," a reconciliation, a blessing. And it is the priest who has power to give that blessing.

It is true that the word power is here used in a broad sense obviously beyond the scope of a liturgical ceremony. But at the same time it constitutes an authentic extension thereof and reveals that there is a depth of meaning in blessings frequently unrealized by our contemporaries who see only an insignificant ritualism. That is a result of the neglect of the use of sacramentals in the Church's work of sanctification. <sup>194</sup>

### **Minister of the Ritual**

When the bishop exhorts the new priest to bless, *sacerdotem oportet benedicere*, he refers to a function repeatedly mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. This blessing, that is, those words and gesture which implore God's favor on someone or something, is reserved, from the institution of the priesthood, exclusively to the priests of the Old and then of the New Covenant. <sup>195</sup>

The reason is given in the Pontifical: only their consecrated hands can give a blessing. <sup>196</sup>

The Church has defended this power against two sets of adversaries: against those who, with Pelagius, claim that nature is essentially good and therefore does not need to be blessed, and, conversely, against the negations of the Reformation which claim that nature is essentially corrupt, not fit for consecration. <sup>197</sup>

What the Church teaches must be held to more than ever today when it is of great value and importance.

### **Craftsman of the Universal Rehabilitation**

And that is why the Ritual, that is, the official compilation of sacramental rites and benediction, takes on such significance. The priest has a power over and a duty with regard to temporal things because he alone is "the man of the Ritual." He has to place them under the control of the Holy Ghost Who makes the earth fruitful. <sup>198</sup>

In the Church his is the task of reconciling all created things with God; not overnight or without a struggle, but progressively,

starting with the smallest things. One has only to open that wonderful book, the Ritual, to see that this is so. Nowhere else does the Church manifest more clearly her maternal love and concern for the passing companions of our earthly journey. The liturgy neglects nothing.<sup>199</sup> It blesses houses, bread, eggs, fruits. It thinks of fountains, ships, stables, fields, sick animals. It does not forget bees, wax, tools. It sanctifies water, light, fire, incense. There is nothing it does not encounter with sympathy, even tenderness. It is surprised at none of the most recent discoveries: machines, railways, automobiles, airplanes, telegraph, seismograph and soon television. It encompasses everything, it admits everything for man's good use and as related to his eternal destiny for which, as stressed in the liturgy, those mysterious elements serve as symbols.

### The Open Book

Like the Church the priest will disown nothing in the temporal order. He who is called the man who rejects the world, which he does in a certain way, is also the man who accepts and welcomes it. He is accused of withdrawing, and yet he is the *minister of universal integration*. Thanks to him "everything which God hath created . . . is good and nothing need be rejected if it is brought under the action of grace for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."<sup>200</sup> How can he be accused of being archaic when he continuously saves progress by putting it in context and keeping it within bounds? Is it not he who makes human enterprises valuable by giving them meaning?

One of the most impressive features of the Ritual is that it is an unfinished book: an open book waiting for additional pages as when discoveries of the mind, hand, tools and released energy will add new things to those which the hands of the priest are already blessing. Meanwhile, in order to be sure that nothing on earth or in the depths of the waters escapes her solicitude, the Church as a loving evidence of her great magnanimity and of her complete trust in the grace of Christ the King has composed this blessing, the "benediction *ad omnia*": "O God, by Whose word all things are made holy, pour out thy blessing on these creatures . . . through Christ Our Lord."

\* \* \*

You will notice, Beloved Brethren, that when a priest blesses he makes a gesture, one which does not vary however much the formulae do. On the person or object which he wishes to bless, he traces the sign of the Cross. Not just arbitrarily, for that move-



ment of the hand in space is God's very signature, the essential seal without which there are, for Him, no authentic sons or creatures. That mark of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the unchanging reminder for the men of today as for the men of yesterday and of tomorrow that there is only one road for temporal things as well as for immortal persons, only one redemption: salvation through the Cross.

### III. The Mass and Temporal Society

The Sacrifice of Calvary took place historically but once. By that one act the redemption was accomplished.<sup>201</sup> "It was by the Blood of the Cross" that God "elected to reconcile with Himself, through Christ, all things: those which are on earth and those which are in Heaven."<sup>202</sup>

This is the Sacrifice that Christ wants to renew always and everywhere: It is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is not Our intention, Beloved Brethren, to expand here even briefly the doctrine of the Eucharistic Mystery, but rather to touch upon it from the point of view of the temporal order.

We shall first compare the official atheism of our age with the religion of the old pagan world and then point out that what the present world lacks in comparison with the ancient can be supplied to a transcendent degree in the unique Oblation of the Priest of the New Dispensation.

#### 1. RELIGION AND SOCIETY

"The human race has always felt the need of a priesthood: of men, that is, who have the official charge to be mediators between God and humanity, men who should consecrate themselves entirely to this mediation, as to the very purpose of their lives, men set aside to offer to God public prayers and sacrifices in the name of human society. For human society as such is bound to offer to God public and social worship. It is bound to acknowledge in Him its supreme Lord and first beginning, and to strive toward Him as to its last end, to give Him thanks and offer Him propitiation."<sup>203</sup>

The history of the ancient world demonstrates that "religion is what holds every society together. . . . The social order was composed of those who had the same protecting gods and who performed the religious act at the same altar. . . . In any city nothing was more sacred than that altar on which the sacred fire was ever kept burning."<sup>204</sup>

## **The Lesson of the Ancient World**

Therefore pagan society was fundamentally religious. It was so in domestic life as well as in social life. "There was not a single act of public life in which the gods did not intervene. . . . The people gathered together when there was a religious occasion for doing so. . . . The meeting began with prayer. . . . The tribune was a sacred place. . . . The tribunal sessions took place near an altar and began by a sacrifice. . . . The army on campaign reflected society as a whole. . . . It carried along a 'pyrophore' in which the sacred fire was kept burning day and night. . . . So religion was interwoven in everything, both in peacetime and in wartime. It was present everywhere, it surrounded man. The soul, the body, private life, public life, meals, festivities, everything was under the sway of the state religion. . . . It governed the human being with such absolute authority that there remained nothing outside its influence."<sup>205</sup>

## **Shortcomings and Possibilities of the Present Social Order**

Our society can take a strong lesson from the ancients. It can be said we have learned everything and forgotten everything. When our society lost its religion and its priests, through considering them as a separate entity and, as it were, a profession among others, the temporal order lost its soul, its unity and life. In becoming secular it lost its kinship with the eternal and the absolute. In wanting to become self-contained it became self-contradictory and unintelligible. It cut itself off from the only real stream of history, that of mankind returning to its Creator, journeying toward its true end.

To come alive again society must recover its soul. It becomes upset when a philosopher laments at "the disproportion between the soul of mankind as a whole, having remained substantially what it used to be, and its enormously developed body."<sup>206</sup> Perhaps society is beginning to wake up in its extremity. Maybe it is not merely out of respect for the past or through admiration of great art that people are gravitating toward our churches with something like a nostalgia. Society does not dare pretend any longer that the Christian faith "resembles a Gothic cathedral in its greatness, emptiness and lack of solidity."<sup>207</sup> It knows that the cathedral would never have been conceived and built if it had been only an empty treasure-chest.

If society fulfills its duty to God it will not have to sacrifice its own proper ends. These latter are valid only to the extent that they are integrated into a larger whole and are subordinated

to higher ends which society has a duty to acknowledge by providing for man's religious needs. So religion and society, the priesthood and citizenry, do not add up as two unrelated terms; the priestly role here again is not just one among others. It may not be juxtaposed with other functions. Rather its mission is to raise up society, to convert it (while respecting, be it said again, all other functions and values) not only by exorcising and blessing human things, but by *binding* them actively to God (that is the very meaning of the word "religion"), by incorporating them into the stream of praise, worship, petition and supplication for forgiveness which carries humanity along in the wake of the Sovereign Priest, toward His Father and ours.

By so doing, the Church, We repeat, has no intention of unduly encroaching on temporal affairs, the autonomy of which she expressly acknowledges. Nor does she, who respects men's consciences, aim at "requisitioning" or circumventing groups and persons who have not yet given her their free allegiance, even in order to render this homage.

### Local Cults and the Universal Religion

One can see from the above how much our ideas have progressed beyond the provincialism of pagan society. "Each city had its own body of priests who were free of allegiance to outside authority. Between the priests of any two cities there existed no ties . . . no exchange of teachings nor of rites. . . . Religion was entirely local, and civil, this word being taken in the original meaning, that is, proper to each city."<sup>208</sup>

Religion was purely local, but also materialistic and inefficacious. It could offer God only the fruits of the earth or animals, simply a human version of the only worship capable of pleasing God and of uniting mankind in the universal sacrifice. What the pagan religion lacked present-day society has near at hand within its reach. Before Christ "there existed, indeed, an infinitely adorable God, but an infinite worshipper had not yet come."<sup>209</sup> Now on the other hand men can penetrate into the very heart of the love of the Trinity. "Our Lord came into the world as *the universal man* to render to God, His Father, all the honor due Him from creation."<sup>210</sup>

### 2. THE PRIEST, MINISTER OF SOCIETY'S WORSHIP

The culmination of this perfect adoration is the Mass. "In the Divine Sacrifice which takes place at Mass Christ is present and immolates Himself in an unbloody manner, just as He offered

Himself one time in a bloody manner on the Cross." Without adding any comment to that simple statement of the Council of Trent, We should like to show you, Beloved Brethren, that in and through the Mass you have a certain power to offer the world to God, but that it is the prerogative solely of priests so to consecrate it in the sacramental immolation of Christ on the altar.

### *The Offering of the Baptized*

The encyclical *Mediator Dei* recalls the fact that "the chief element of divine worship must be interior . . . the exhortation of the Apostle: 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,' requires that all Christians should possess, as far as is humanly possible, the same dispositions as those which the Divine Redeemer had when He offered Himself in sacrifice: that is to say . . . pay adoration, honor, praise and thanksgiving to the Supreme Majesty of God."<sup>211</sup>

The instruction therefore is clear. Christians also have the duty of offering in the Mass their own selves, all that they possess and their environments. They have no right to remain passive witnesses of the Sacrifice. If they do, "religion clearly amounts to mere formalism, without meaning and without content."<sup>212</sup>

The right upon which the duty of participation is based proceeds from the real power given, as We said before, to every baptized person by the baptismal character. "In the office of the mysterious priesthood of Christ . . . and of the Sacrifice . . . not only the chosen ministers of the immaculate oblation participate . . . but also all the Christian people, rightly called by the Prince of Apostles 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood'; for the faithful ought to cooperate in that oblation be it for themselves or for the whole of mankind, in expiation of our sins."<sup>213</sup>

As a matter of fact the celebrant usually expresses himself in the plural.<sup>214</sup>

### **Commensurate Oblation**

The faithful must remember that they have the duty of participating actively in the oblation. Their participation, if it is not to fall below God's expectations, should embrace the whole of their lives. But, as Christian revelation teaches, the faithful are not scattered individuals. God placed them in, and wants them to form part of, living communities: family, countries, mankind. By the same token they are united and responsible for each other. Therefore, Beloved Brethren, when you approach the altar you should never do so alone. Along with you bring your household,



the people on your street, in your city and the whole of society which you have the power and the duty to save.

The offerings of Christians should not be all alike. To each vocation corresponds a particular oblation. The workers will offer up the monotony of the assembly line or the joy of handiwork, the mother of a family her domestic worries, her fears for a sick child. The scientist will offer up his search into the secrets of the earth, the totality of his understanding of the universe. To the scholar, the philosopher, the sociologist and the budding artist belongs at this turning point of history the task of drawing the world together and raising it up to the Father.

In this way the Mass, which holds such a slight place in temporal society in the eyes of those who ignore it, should appear even to them as a tremendously powerful leaven of human perfection.

### **Catholic Intellectuals and the Offering of All Creation**

The Catholic intellectual of our times has an exceptional mission: that of reintegrating under God's inspiration culture and theology which have for several centuries been cut off bit by bit from each other. To the positivist mystic, who wants to *possess the world without offering it up*, to the Jansenistic rigorist who wants to condemn the temporal order and humanism as sinful by nature and content himself in the Mass *with offering what he does not possess*, the Catholic must respond with Christian realism. His motto will be: *Take possession of the world in order to offer it to God*. Conquer everything; matter without which there would be no bread, no wine, no Host; spirit which is requisite for faith and love, so as to render all to God. The universe is like an unexplored continent. It belongs to the one who gets there first. Christian thinkers should be the first to arrive so as to plant the Cross there. To extend the limits of the known world is to enlarge the subject matter of the offertory and therefore of redemption.

### **The Mass and the Suffering World**

The fact that in our times the job of gaining possession of a universe in process of being born takes precedence, does not mean that it is our exclusive duty. Human grief, failure, sin, error, perversion of morals, disease, social oppression, political and international hatreds, all these must be abolished, cleansed, comforted, healed. It is humanity as it is with all its faults and its griefs which the offertory must gather together and which the Mass must cause to be *resolved* in the heart of God. But there is more to it than dedicating a reconquered universe to God. A

consecration and a redemption must be effected, and that demands something more. Now it is not enough to offer, there must also be sacrifice. For that mere Baptism is not enough, one has to be a priest.

### *Prerogatives of the Priest*

When the Pontifical makes it a duty for the priest to "offer," it intends reserving to the priesthood the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. As we have just said, that does not exclude a certain participation by Christian people: "The faithful do offer the Divine Victim." They are capable of it by reason of the power of worship conferred upon them by the baptismal character, "though in a different sense."<sup>215</sup> "But the conclusion that the people offer the Sacrifice with the priest himself is not based on the fact that, being members of the Church no less than the priest himself, they perform a visible, liturgical rite; for this is the privilege only of the minister who has been divinely appointed to this office. . . ."<sup>216</sup>

Consecrated and therefore fitted to offer, laymen remain radically incapable of being consecrators. The priest only, by virtue of his power of Holy Orders, is the instrument of Christ and acts in His name, in His stead. "The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim, is performed by the priest and by him alone, as the representative of Christ and not as the representative of the faithful. . . . This is undoubtedly so, whether the faithful are present . . . or are not present, since it is in no wise required that the people ratify what the sacred minister has done."<sup>217</sup>

A signal privilege: without the priest there would be no Eucharistic Consecration, no sacramental Victim, no Mass.

### **The Priest and the Consecration of the World**

If there were no Mass the whole offering of the world would be futile, the whole "offertory" of created things would be unintelligible. The whole effort of men to bring the universe back to God would be ineffectual and incomplete. For the Sacrifice of the Mass, because it continues the Sacrifice of the Cross, constitutes the essential act and the culminating point of Christ's redeeming mediation.

So by his power over the sacramental Body of Christ the priest becomes by continuation the privileged instrument of the consecration of the world. In that brief moment when he holds the Host in his hands and allows the Sovereign Priest to utter the

words of consecration through his lips, the most insignificant and humble priest embraces the whole universe and continues the process of its redemption.

Today's priest must realize this tremendous truth more than it was ever necessary to do so before.

He will, of course, gather together in that act and at that sublime instant, all of his pastoral intentions: all those he mentioned at the two *Mementos*, the parish of which he is pastor or assistant, his own work, the militants whom he must nourish with the living God. But he ought not limit himself to his own sphere; he must extend his intentions to the whole world.

First, to all mankind. He will identify himself with its hopes and as well become its "axis of misery." He shall repeat the splendid prayer attributed to Saint Ambrose, which the Breviary suggests as a preparation for Mass: "Lord, I offer Thee the tribulations of peoples, the perils of nations, the moanings of the captive, the grief of orphans, the destitution of the sick, the distress of invalids, the weakening of the aged . . . the tears of widows."<sup>218</sup>

But to be really co-extensive with the true dimensions of the world, the intentions of the priest should be universal: not confined to what he sees or knows, not limited to those who are present at Mass. It should stretch out beyond the limits of his church or chapel, it should encompass in time and in space all creatures, spiritual or inanimate, to bring them together from the four winds to the foot of the eternal Calvary. In her liturgy the Church herself sings, "*Terra, pontus, astra, mundus, Quo lavantur flumine*: the earth, the sea, the stars, the universe, are washed by that Blood." It is to the priest that they owe that, for it is he who has exorcised and blessed them, he who baptizes them in the blood of Jesus Christ.

### **The Sacrament of Holy Orders**

So one can understand now how well the priesthood deserves in a broad, not an historical, sense to be called the "Sacrament of Holy Orders"; as meaning the re-establishment of all things in Jesus Christ. To bring order into the world again; to restore the beauty and the goodness it once had and which has been promised it again; to "recreate" it in its original purity and harmony, is indeed the mission and power of the priest.

But this restoration of order to a sinful world will not be accomplished without a purifying immolation. To that guilty world and to contemporary man, so eternally torn apart by the forces of love and egotism, the priest brings salvation because he

performs in them and for them the Crucifixion which alone can heal the wounds of egotism, hatred and sin.

Indeed, through the priest who consecrates, it is the "whole of Christ's Mystical Body, that is to say, the redeemed City of Man which offers itself to God through Christ" immolating itself to the eternal Father along with the Head Who suffered for it.<sup>219</sup> And wherever the effects of the Mass penetrate effectively they solicit this immolation and mysteriously perform it.

At the altar the priest, like Christ, is the victim. But he is also the sacrificer; he is then the dreadful man, the one who works death, the one who kills sin and burns it, the one who is crucified and who crucifies, the one who cannot save the world, nor will consent to its salvation save through nailing it to the Cross. "Without the shedding of blood there is no redemption."<sup>220</sup>

### **The Man of God**

It is here in the Mass that the priest exercises his role of mediation in its fullness and that his eminent superiority over the faithful is most clearly seen.

When he speaks to God it is in the name of all of us; what he does "for our salvation and that of the whole world"<sup>221</sup> he does as the representative of human society. He draws it all together and with outstretched arms and in the name of the Church offers it up with the Host to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Ghost. *The priest in the human community*, but also the whole of *the human community in the priest*. It is he who raises it to God. He introduces it to and ingratiates it with Him. Not by virtue of his own power, nor by the delegation of the faithful, but by virtue of Christ, the sole Mediator with Whom he is identified at the altar more than anywhere else. Thus he is, in this work, always certain of being acceptable since when he speaks it is no longer he but the Word Incarnate Who addresses Himself to His Father, "interceding on our behalf,"<sup>222</sup> and showing His pierced hands.

### **The Man of Men**

God's answer, moreover, is not long delayed. Here again it comes to us through the priest. He alone, in the consecration, has the power to make Christ present, to cause Him to "descend." Only he, also, can bequeath Him to us and dispense His gifts on this needy earth; he is the "dispenser of the mysteries of God."<sup>223</sup> In Communion he gives the Sacred Body of the Son, in the tabernacle he perpetuates His real presence and, through the Eucharist in which Saint Thomas sees their common finality, he opens the



font of the grace of all the Sacraments. In him, through him, is God given to men and rendered present in the community, in the universe.

The priesthood has one mission with two aspects. "Incorporated into Christ the Priest . . . priests will be called to enter, one after another, into the stream of His ascending mediation, to offer to God, by Him, with Him and in Him all the men of their generation; and also in the stream of His descending mediation in order to give, by Him, with Him and in Him, God to all the men of their generation."<sup>224</sup>

The ambassador of God and the representative of men; it is at Mass that the priest is to an eminent degree the mediator of mankind and the "defender of the City of Man." He saves it, he brings it to fruit in its misery as in its worthiness and notwithstanding its faults, transcending its own desires.

### *The Priest, Minister of Prayer: the Divine Office*

In the Missal the Church includes a canticle of praise in the official thanksgiving of the bishop and the priest immediately after Mass: "All the works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord." By inviting them to associate the whole of the created universe, angels, men, animals and plants of the earth, the stars and everything contained under the firmament, to their gratitude as well as to hers, the Church clearly wants to emphasize the universal character of the redemption being perpetuated by the priest at the altar.

But it is also at all hours of the day that the Church makes it a duty for her ministers to resume that divine praise. She entrusts them with a book, the book of her official prayer, *the Breviary*. Whether the secular priest recites it in the abridged form or the religious sings it integrally in his monastery as his major duty, the Divine Office is, next to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the greatest public bond of mankind with God, in the Church and through her.

So we come to another aspect of the priest's calling. He is to be a man of prayer. Not only of private prayer which he does on his own and in which he speaks for himself, but of an official and collective prayer ordered to the glory of God and to the salvation of the whole of mankind.

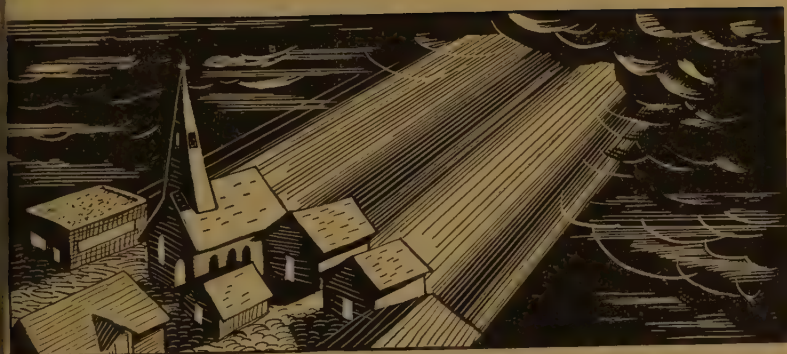
When he recites those psalms, hymns, scriptural passages and their commentaries, he acquires a certain power and right; a power over God Who never resists the pleas of His Son nor is deaf to the "voice of the Spouse" of Christ; a power over the world to preserve it against sin and to reconcile it with God.

Turned toward God, ordered to men; the priest is mediator.

As man of God he worships Him, he returns thanks to Him, on behalf of the whole community; in the name of the men who know God and pray to Him; in the name of those who know Him not; more still, in the name of those who reject God and are encompassed by the world. But in that uninterrupted homage to God the Creator and Savior, the ambassador of God also remembers that he is the representative of men; and in their stead and on their behalf, he beseeches, he implores succor and forgiveness.

This is the reason for the recitation of the Divine Office which, in the eyes of the world, seems an arid formalism, a useless archaism. It is a "*civic*" function, a *capital act of society, an eminent ministry of the community of men*. That useless one, that man who over the whole surface of the globe recites in the same tongue that forgotten book, that man who is preoccupied with invisible things while other men are busy with the affairs of this world, is not a parasitical citizen; at each instant his prayer strives to transfigure and save the City of Man.





### PART THREE

## Reciprocal Duties

After having taken up so much of your time, Beloved Brethren, in outlining the principles, We are not going to give all the applications or write a treatise on pastoral theology. We should merely like, in conclusion, to state a few *corollaries* showing what the ministers of God have to do on their part and the faithful on theirs so that the priest's work in the temporal order may materialize and become effective.

### I. Priestly Spirituality

The first thing a priest must do to lead a priestly life is to realize that he is a priest, to become more and more aware of the nature of the priesthood with which he has been invested. No meditation will ever be worth so much as this one. No acts of generosity will ever replace it. The efficacy of the priesthood lies first of all in its spirituality. And this spirituality is not to be sought in external means or in fortuitous devotions. The priesthood is sufficient in itself, on condition however that each priest make it the center and the goal of his life, and also that he always revert to it as the primary and ever fruitful source of his thought and action.

Although it is necessary in all ages, a priestly spirituality is especially needed in modern society. For today priests are so often denied not only their position but even their rights, that in time they begin to feel a vague uneasiness or become defensive, they are apt to develop an inferiority complex. The true and only means they have of delivering themselves from this will not be to divert their attention to other things but to turn toward themselves and apply to their own case, duly transposing it, the well-

known exhortation which Saint Leo addressed to the Christians of his time: "Priests, know your own dignity!"<sup>225</sup>

It goes without saying, this does not mean that they should be vain about a privilege which is strictly gratuitous. It does mean that they should have a deeper consciousness of and a more profound respect for "the great things done in them by Him Who is all powerful,"<sup>226</sup> and no longer have any doubts that their ministry has really divine powers at its disposal. Along with this realization their humility should increase with the years. Every morning, at the beginning of their day, priests ought to kneel before their Crucifix even though they are weighted down perhaps with the prospect of the day's burden. But when their prayer is finished and Mass has been said they will be able to face the world with the "mentality of conquerors"<sup>227</sup> stemming from a "faith that moves mountains"<sup>228</sup> with a boundless hope in the victory of grace.

The priest does not have to look far afield then for this priestly spirituality, he has only to deduce it. If the priest is by definition a mediator, his spirituality, and hence his concrete action in society, must safeguard a double set of values: those which will make him "the man of God" and those which will make him truly "the man among men."

## 1. CONSECRATED

Priestly spirituality will first of all be a mystique of consecration, which is simply the consequence of the real transformation of the priest's own being by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. If it is true that a character has forever marked his soul with the sign of God, the priest must accept the consequences thereby imposed on him: his segregation from men and his likeness to Christ.

### **Segregation from Men**

The priest no longer belongs to anyone, he belongs to God Who has drawn him apart to take him into His service. Therefore, while fully sharing humanity he will resign himself not to know, experience and enjoy all that is human. He will be a real "man," but not as other men. Mingling with them and present to them, he will manage to remain distinct. He will not think he is being inferior or a traitor because he stops short of certain responsibilities even though they are most legitimate. For one of his means of action is precisely to abstain and confound. One of his duties consists in *a mission of dissimilarity and an apologetic of severance.*



## **likeness to Christ**

Yet the character of Holy Orders does much more than separate, it creates a likeness. Let the priest remember that! His first effort in the order of sanctity will be to accentuate the characteristic of that resemblance and identify himself, actively and more each day, with the One Whose image he must be.

An interior life, an increasing intimacy with the Sovereign Priest through asceticism and contemplation, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost Who silently molds his soul, such is the daily duty of the priest. Without this interior pursuit of the likeness of Christ he will be a man of God by his powers and his vocation but not by his life. Such an interior divorce is the source of all pharisaism and apostasy. One who gives himself to God irrevocably on the day of his ordination would never consent to them.

## **Priestly Sanctity**

Ordination gives priests a grace which is at once a capacity for and a call to a sanctity higher than that of those who have simply been baptized. "The worthy exercise of Orders requires not any kind of goodness but excellent goodness, in order that as they who receive Orders are set above the people in the degree of Order, so may they be above them by the merits of holiness."<sup>229</sup> That statement of Saint Thomas', which only expresses a theological truth and an historical tradition, has been made a precept in the Code of Canon Law by the Church: "Clerics must lead an interior and exterior life which is more holy than that of the laity and be a sublime example to them by their virtuousness and the uprightness of their actions."<sup>230</sup>

## **The Perfection of the Priest and the Salvation of Society**

The priest's own perfection is a requisite and, in certain extreme cases, binds under pain of sacrilege: "Those who are not holy must not touch holy things."<sup>231</sup> Although the efficacy of the Sacraments is always obtained by Christ Who is their principal Agent every time the rite is validly performed, nevertheless the holiness of the human minister is called for by the effect to be obtained. But it is also required for the sanctification of the world. To be the "consecrator" thereof it is necessary that the priest be himself, and before all, "consecrated." He must first of all bring about in his own person the triumph of the "new man." Before he does so, and in order to "exorcise" the efforts of humanity to bring the universe out of its chaotic state, the priest must rid himself of his own "ambiguity" and unify his own person. So it can be seen that the ideal of self-identification with Christ, far from

turning the priest away from the earthly city, brings him back to it directly. Indeed, how otherwise would it be possible for him to direct mankind to God were he not himself already bound to Him? Mankind will not follow any other route than his. The priest's own dilemmas foreshadow those of the world, his personal victories will prepare the way for those of the universe.

### **Asceticism and Contemplation**

However, the priest must not use his goal of tremendous solidarity with mankind as a pretext for abandoning the traditional means of sanctification in favor of a spirituality based on the principle that activity carries its own asceticism with it, and that ministering to souls provides in itself all the solace the minister needs. The ageless wisdom of the Church which knows that intimate contact with the human heart is a powerful stimulus to holiness—"It is for them that I sanctify myself"<sup>232</sup>—also knows the dangers inherent in sustained dealings with a sinful world. Prayer, spiritual reading, days of recollection, retreats, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the rosary, examination of conscience, regular Confession, protracted thanksgiving, well-recited Breviary, Mass celebrated carefully and meditatively;<sup>233</sup> these are spiritual exercises which no priest may neglect, much less abandon, without committing an imprudence whose consequences (have no illusions about it) may make of it a serious sin.<sup>234</sup>

Both for his own protection and to guard the integrity of the "deposit of the faith" of which he is custodian, the priest must consider it "a very grave error . . . to neglect his own sanctification, and become overly immersed in external works, however holy . . ."<sup>235</sup> If he wants the faithful to imitate him, he must, in an age made sceptical by the abuse of propaganda, first of all influence others by his own example and by his supernatural virtues. People today are always taking notes and making comparisons. If the priest's supernatural virtues are not supported by genuine, supernaturalized *natural virtues*, they will seem odd or despicable. Being made a priest does not dispense one from being loyal, or courageous, or magnanimous, or from having a keen sense of justice. Without these qualities the priest will not appeal to what is best in modern man and humanism, and he should not be surprised that he does not.

### **Priestly Culture and Consecration**

To that spirituality of consecration we consider it also necessary to associate the serious problem of priestly culture. For though it is true that the priest should attain a high degree of

knowledge, it is not only so he can set himself on a level with the intelligentsia nor solely to win people to Christian dogma and morals, nor even so as to acquire an understanding of sacred doctrine to impart it to souls. All of that really is his duty, but does not exhaust it. Admittedly, "The dignity of the office he holds, and the maintenance of a becoming respect and esteem among the people, which helps so much in his pastoral work, demand more than purely ecclesiastical learning. The priest must be graced by no less knowledge and culture than is usual among well-bred and well-educated people of his day. This is to say that he must be healthily modern."<sup>236</sup> But his knowledge should be directed higher. If the priest wants to be not only a learned man or a scholar, but the *doctor of the city*, as his priesthood makes it his duty for him to be, he must acquire a culture which will enable him to see the world, men and things, *from God's point of view*; that is to say, to save them and "consecrate" them in their entirety. In this respect his culture must be "theological." It should penetrate deeply into dogma without adding or subtracting anything, and embrace the whole of human knowledge. "None should remain content with a standard of learning and culture which sufficed, perhaps, in other times . . . they must actually attain a higher standard of general education and of learning. It must be broader and more complete; and it must correspond to the generally higher level and wider scope of modern education as compared with the past."<sup>237</sup> It is only too obvious that such a task will not be the work of one person. It devolves on the whole clergy collectively, but each priest must assume his quota of it according to his ability and he ought to consider it a fault to prefer, in principle, a pragmatic and individualistic to a united approach toward the ultimate triumph of Christianity on a global scale.

### *The Mystique of Consecration*

So the priest's culture, like his holiness, is not really his nor for himself. Because of his consecration they are both ordered to the glory of God as well as to the universal redemption. It can be seen how, without paradox, the priest's interior life, as also his learning, is literally a *public function* and a *social ministry*. The priest must saturate himself with this truth. It will gradually permeate to his innermost depths. It will give meaning to his whole life by reconciling in a more comprehensive unity these two apparently contradictory calls: the call of God and the call of men. Whenever he contemplates, whenever he worships God

in silence, the priest carries his whole flock in himself. Wherever he goes he never goes alone; he must not, he may no longer do so. He does not say "my Father," but "our Father." Even his personal prayer preserves a collective character. He no longer has anything belonging to him as his private property. Even in the intimacy of his interior life he is a man who has given himself up. But the inverse is, or at least should be, equally true. When he is in the midst of his brethren, absorbed in preaching or acting, he is not alone: Another abides in him, acts, speaks, influences and performs through "the infirmity of his flesh."<sup>238</sup> In whatever he does he represents and commits God.

So the priest is always, so to speak, on "official business." When God beholds him and listens to him, it is as the ambassador of men, and when men look at him and hear him it is as God's envoy. Let him be conscious of this and apply to his own life, with appropriate adaptations, the saying of the Venerable Bede: "When angels come to us they fulfill their external ministry in such a way that they never so much as interrupt the contemplation that is going on within them."<sup>239</sup>

### *The Mystique of Belonging*

The *mystique of consecration* produces in priests a humble and profound respect for the divine dignity of their priesthood, along with a constant urge toward holiness and a perpetual anxiety for perfection. A truly mediatorial spirituality demands in addition a *mystique of belonging*. For it is only in belonging to his brethren that a priest will resemble Christ. How could the identification be perfect if the minister did not continue and share the very same mission as his Master, that is, to be the Savior of men? The Whole Christ is not only the Adorer of the Father, the "Religious of God," but also the Preacher of the Gospel and the Good Shepherd.

This community of destiny with Christ in which the priest assumes and takes charge of all Christ's redemptive intentions is not therefore something supererogatory. Nor is it reserved to certain priests. It must be present in all of them because it is an integral part of priesthood. The priest is not a priest for himself alone but, simultaneously and inseparably, for God and for souls. This does not mean that all priests must exercise their mediation in the same way. The priest called to a religious vocation of contemplation and redemptive expiation still is, even in the cloister, "ordained for men in the things that appertain to God," since he never ceases to "offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins."<sup>240</sup> And the



priest whom God gives charge over souls, whether he is secular or religious, cooperates in their salvation by making himself their *postle*; he is especially God's *envoy* to them.

## 2. ACCESSIBILITY

In the great human family some people are responsible for a home, a trade, or a nation. As for the priest, he takes charge of all men, especially in respect to their souls, that part of them which is immortal. He is accountable for their failures and their spiritual successes. By that very reason they have rights over him. The leader who is over them is *dedicated* to them, is "consecrated" to them. He is their "servant."<sup>241</sup> Every day and in every action he is called to renew the total gift of himself and grant to all without discrimination the welcome of a father, brother or friend. If "among all the divine tasks, that which is most divine is to cooperate with God in the salvation of men," as Dionysius the Areopagite said, it is also a formidable self-discipline for the priest. It does not require an ordinary virtue, but the habit of always being available, of always being present, of giving one's full attention to everything one says, hears or does.

Father Chevrier's motto, "The priest is a consumed man," cannot be quoted too often. Not only because his duties prevent him from doing otherwise, but because it is his duty as a father to sacrifice himself for the nurture of the children, like the sublime "Pelican" to which the liturgy and the sculpture of our cathedrals compare Christ at His Eucharistic Table. The priest will find strength for his radical refusal to behave like a mere functionary, for his skill in adapting himself immediately and having a whole-hearted active sympathy, in those virtues which are specifically his, whether or not he is bound to them by vow: poverty, chastity, and obedience. We have already said they have a symbolic value. We would like to show briefly here that they are requisite for his apostolate because they make the priest wholly accessible.

### *Poverty*

Since he has no material interests to defend the priest is *free*. He has no partnership to be cautious about, no competition to fight. His poverty enables him to be an arbiter; he will never be both judge and partisan. Since he has nothing and desires nothing he is above suspicion. As long as he despises the "treasures of the earth which are consumed by rust and moths,"<sup>242</sup> he can talk about the "pearl of great price."<sup>243</sup> He will be believed and envied. Because he is not a hireling he will draw souls to him. He remains the man who belongs to the unfortunate, the father

of the poor. In certain periods he had the task of distributing the alms of the Church. The modern parallel of this task, at least for our clergy in France as a whole, seems to consist more and more in sharing the destitution of the poor. And that, in more than one case, to a point beyond bearing. There can surely be no question of our taking lightly the lot of some of our country pastors, not to mention some of our city assistants, even though they bear their unhappy plight in silence and dignity. However, except in such extreme cases where destitution becomes literally crushing, the voluntary practice of poverty, which for that matter imposes a duty on the faithful, puts the priest within their reach and at their service. However, it does not dispense him from a meritorious vigilance over the little or practically nothing that he does have. More important still, he has to resist the insidious danger of resorting to wealth under some pretext or for reasons of apostolic efficiency. For though it is his right and his obvious duty to resort to money when it is the only means of attaining necessary things, such as a press, buildings, parish schools, equipment for social or charitable movements, etc., that does not relieve the priest, who receives and distributes these donations, from the duty of not keeping anything for himself. That self-denial must express itself in the whole life of the priest: in his house, his furniture, his leisure activity. It is only when the priest is detached from the world because he is tied to the Cross that he will radiate that glorious freedom the Apostle legitimately boasted about: "We have nothing and possess all things."<sup>244</sup> Through it he will spread confidence, optimism and resignation to divine providence when he takes an active interest in the daily worries common to families and to nations. Like the poor little man of Assisi he will find in his daily meeting with his Lady Poverty less for himself than for society, that "perfect joy" of the "Canticle of the Sun."

### *Chastity*

When he promises in the fullness of his youth to renounce human love forever, the priest knows perfectly well what he is sacrificing. He is not forced into it, as is all too commonly believed or as a pseudo-scientific vulgarization would like to prove. He is neither a weakling nor a dreamer nor the morbid victim of a reactionary and tyrannical Church. Here as nowhere else he is a free man. For one has to be so in order to renounce legitimate pleasures and relinquish the most appealing tenderness of the human heart. It is for a still greater freedom that he binds him-

self to total and perpetual chastity. It is such a lofty virtue that no words can describe it, but it is not an isolated virtue that stands alone. For charity is primary. Without charity, as Saint Gregory says, "chastity loses its greatness."<sup>245</sup> And even in a certain sense it has meaning, for its value comes through love. It is a sign of love. Love alone makes it possible and chastity above all else leads to love.

First of all, *it detaches* the priest not only from his flesh and its excesses but also from human love, from love that is good and is holy, for Christ made a Sacrament of it. It is an engrossing bond however. A husband belongs to his wife and children. He has only a part of his time, of his thought, and his heart left for others. By contrast, as Saint Paul remarks in his eulogy on voluntary virginity, in detaching the apostle from the narrow confines of a home *it attaches* him to everyone, indiscriminately and unreservedly. Men understand this. When they give the priest the beautiful name of "Father" it is because they know that he has left everything in order to beget a higher life in them. Clerical celibacy has its foundation in the spiritual nature of the new dispensation—"God is Spirit."<sup>246</sup> It is also a great help to the minister of exorcism and of the Sacrament of Penance in guarding himself against the sin with which he is in daily contact by the duties of his state in life. But it finds positive justification in an unconditional surrender of the whole person of the priest to God and to his neighbor for the love of God. We love but once. The priest gives himself and he never retracts.

So one can see how voluntary chastity, far from being opposed either violently or subtly to marriage, can be thought of rather as a mystical type of marriage. Without contempt for them the priest waives human nuptials in order to seek beyond them the soul-filling union of the divine espousals. That such a mysterious union of the soul with Christ is closely akin to marriages of this earth follows from the fact that it is, like the latter, a reflection, but closer and still more luminous, of the union of Christ and the Church to which Saint Paul compares the Christian wedlock of man to woman: "This mystery is great."<sup>247</sup>

Celibacy offered to God as a holocaust and in expiation for the sins of the flesh of the whole world also has the effect of indivisibly uniting the priest and the community and of putting him at the service of a higher paternity. "It is to the priests," Saint John Chrysostom wrote, "that the spiritual procreation of souls was entrusted. . . . Our parents beget us to the first life; the priests to the second."

## Obedience

So in being a living sacrifice by his chastity, that is, in the etymological sense, *in making himself and keeping himself sacred*, the priest attains more than the fullness of manhood. In elevating himself he raises society with him and becomes the source of its life. But this he can do only by his allegiance to the Church, through obedience. Far from stifling his initiative, obedience is of double benefit to him.

First, as with poverty and chastity, by detaching him from himself and from his own will it gives him to mankind; it makes him available. Because he no longer acts according to his own will but according to God's, he is, or is capable of becoming, generous to an heroic degree. Above all, that which he dispenses to souls in his teachings will never be the doubtful interpretation of his own pride or fancy, but the "deposit of the faith," the mind of the Church.

Priestly obedience infinitely surpasses ordinary submission to human authorities. We have seen that it is not only disciplinary, but of a *mystical* character. It is through it that the priest becomes a public official and not just a leader without a mandate. His filial docility to the hierarchy will be in itself apostolic; it will serve as an example by arousing the faithful to work with the Church, to do nothing without her. It will make them understand that if they are cut off from the Mystical Body they can do nothing any more, they are worth nothing in the cause of the redemption.

### Mystique of the Bishopric

It is within the framework of obedience that the *apostolate* must be established. The Gospel comes down to us through traditional and official channels. The priest cannot set himself up as a preacher of the Good Tidings; he is *sent* by the Church, more precisely by the bishop. For "the Church is in the bishop."<sup>248</sup> He is not only a leader who gives orders, controls things or reprimands; he is the symbol and the source of unity and of life. "Let the priests do nothing without the bishop's approbation, for it is to him that the Lord's fold is entrusted!"<sup>249</sup> An essential truth. If he cut himself off from the bishop, a priest would cut himself off from the Mystical Body "as the branch from the Vine." So the priest's apostolate is clearly defined: it should be, as the Pontifical says, a minister's activity, one befitting the "cooperator" of the bishop.<sup>250</sup> It is obvious that this substantial subordination to the "ordinary" cannot be isolated from allegiance to the Supreme



bishop, that is, to the Pope. For the authority of the Vicar of Jesus Christ extends not only to the universal Church but to all the individuals who compose it. He is pre-eminently the bishop of each and all, without thereby depriving of their powers and authority those whom he himself has designated as successors to the Apostles.

### **The Apostolate of the Church**

So in any case it is the bishop who is the head with respect to those who are simply priests. By uniting themselves to his ordinary priesthood, by participating in the "pastoral charity" of their head, they will safeguard the right order of the work of evangelization which is indivisible and communitarian. The apostolate is the action of *the Church*. The bishop and the priests associated with him for preaching and for the care of souls within his diocese are not merely working side by side, they have a close solidarity. The apostolate is not individualistic; it is the collective effort of the clergy *as a body* and of the Christian community. It seems as though our priests today realize this truth more and more clearly. In any case the community trend, more marked every day from a practical point of view, seems to proceed from much more than a desire for efficiency, and economy of forces, or from the need for mutual consolation and moral support, etc. It seems to indicate, as though in response to stirrings of the Holy Ghost, a healthy return to the organic unity of the Christian community, to the Church's communion of love.

### **One Priesthood Only**

This regaining of the consciousness of unity, in its *intimate depths*, especially affects the priesthood. And in a twofold way. First, it proves that there does not exist, as some would like to believe, a "higher" and a "lower" clergy. To become convinced of this one has only to attend an ordination. After the imposition of the hands on those who are being ordained, all the priests who are present, imitating the gesture of the bishop, surround him as his own family. And shortly afterwards the new priests whom he has just ordained group themselves in turn around him to "concelebrate," to offer with him the unique Sacrifice. It is a tangible and ever touching proof of a single "Presbyterium," of a single and same priesthood. Furthermore, the secular clergy and the regular clergy do not constitute two parallel and unrelated entities. It is not our intention to broach here the problem of their specific relations and nature. Let us simply recall the fact that if the Church has made her own those different vocations, it

is because they are both valuable. Without a doubt the *care of souls—cura animarum*—belongs by right and direct mandate to the diocesan priests by reason of the territory for which they are responsible before God and before the Church. But the religious have received, either from the Pope or from the bishops, power and mission to *assist* the clergy, in a complementary manner, in their complex job of studying, teaching, preaching, missionary work, and spirituality.

The history of the Church, especially in recent times, shows the reciprocal benefit which has accrued to both clergies as a consequence of such fraternal cooperation, thus forming as it were "the seamless robe" of Christ's one priesthood.

At this point no one will say that priestly obedience is a secondary virtue. It does even more than make the priest available; it helps him by the grace of God to perpetuate the Church and hence to save society.

## **II. Duties of the Faithful**

And now We turn to you, Dearly Beloved Brethren (the faithful), to remind you of three duties you have in regard to the priesthood. We have selected these particular ones among so many others because they seem especially timely and directly in line with what we have just said.

### **1. THE MEANING OF THE PRIESTHOOD**

The comparison which Saint Gregory of Nysse boldly makes (you will recall it) between the priest and the Sacred Host is very enlightening. "The bread is at first ordinary bread but when consecration has sanctified it, it is said to be and really becomes the Body of Christ." So it is with the priest: "He suddenly becomes head and doctor appointed to the mysteries. Externally and in his appearance nothing is changed but by an invisible force and through grace his soul is henceforth transformed."<sup>251</sup> As with the Sacred Host the priest is the sign of a divine reality and, at the same time, hides it. The verses of the *Adoro Te* can be applied to him; in the presence of such poor and obscure signs "reason almost fails," but what is enigmatic to reason becomes luminous and alive through faith. To recognize God in the person of His ministers, reason is inadequate; one must believe. One must acknowledge that beneath the surface there is something ineffable which infinitely transcends what can be seen and imagined.

#### **The Duty of Understanding**

The spirit of faith which you will need "in order to look upon your priests as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the

mysteries of God"<sup>252</sup> requires first of all that you *understand them*. That is to say, you must never forget that they are, and that they remain, men. God does not perform a miracle to wrest them from the human state. The priesthood does not of itself give a person the power to do everything or to excel in everything. It is important to remember this lest you fall into a very old error<sup>253</sup> which crops up now and again, that of dehumanizing the priesthood and consequently of setting the priest outside of ordinary life. That does great harm for by thus isolating him, as unbelievers do, to the exclusive realm of ceremonies and rites, he is deprived in good part of his very reason for being. If men refuse to pass through him, he no longer can be, at least fully, their mediator. Many Christians think they are honoring and doing a favor to their priests by confining them to what they think is the "sacred" area, whereas in fact it is only the "ecclesiastical" realm, that is (according to the current meaning of the word which has robbed it of its native nobility) to a secondary and contingent function. They surround the priest and imprison him in a network of prejudices or pharisaical deference, and then a little later they blame him for not taking an active part in community life.

### **The Duty of Respect**

Inversely, the spirit of faith ought to prompt a deep respect for the man of God. Not by any means a servile respect as though the clergy were a special caste, but a religious respect which can be given with wholesome simplicity. The faithful should not, however, content themselves with just feeling respect, for there must be an act of deference, a homage rendered to the majesty of God's presence in His ministers. It is a gesture as well of gratitude toward Our Lord for His kindness in perpetuating Himself in the world in the form which is most accessible to us, that of a man like ourselves.

These dispositions of faith must not remain purely interior but should express themselves in a practical manner. Mothers of families will know how to instill in their children, right from their earliest childhood, habits of special courtesy toward the ministers of God. This is one of the most charming features of Catholic countries. Christian parents should see to it that the priesthood is honored in their homes. They should welcome the priest there as they would Our Lord Himself. Christians should bear in mind that, quite logically, they owe to the ambassador of the highest Sovereign the honors which governments of this world

extend to the representatives of earthly powers. They should from their hearts pay the priest their highest tributes of respect.

A big step will be made in the right direction, Beloved Brethren, the day that Christians who are ordinarily ignorant of most everything about the priest (his material difficulties, his isolation, his psychology) will put him on the real plane of his mysterious duality where he is both one of them and the transcendent envoy of the Lord. One of the first duties of Catholics is to grasp again the *meaning of the priesthood*. It is up to them, and only at the price of this understanding, to reinstate the priest in his proper place in society.

## 2. THE NECESSARY COLLABORATION

"Since, Beloved Brethren, the master of a ship and such as take passage in it have a common ground of fear and security, they should be of the same mind, in a matter of common interest."<sup>254</sup> These words which the bishop addresses to the faithful before the ordination of new priests We again make Ours as a basis for the second duty which We propose to you.

"A common interest." We know already that the Church comprises the priesthood and the Christian people inseparably united. Without going over the principles again We offer here two corollaries as watchwords.

### Take Care of Your Priests

The first is that you *take care* of your clergy. Not so as to reverse the roles, for the priest is responsible for you. But to help him with his mission of authority and life. Your priests are poor, you must help them live. They have forsaken everything for you, frequently giving up a career comparable or superior to your own; you must remember that. You must do everything in your power to relieve the priests of their administrative tasks and even of the menial chores which take up their time and strength, much to the detriment of their interior life and their ministry. You must facilitate their endeavors. You must offer them your arms, your time, your houses, your culture. You must discreetly watch over their health. Finally, having better grasped their material needs and those of the Church from having seen them at closer range, you are to be generous in giving material assistance. This is partly an act of charity but mostly a matter of strict justice. It is not up to your priests to demand it—you must take the initiative in supporting the Church.

But you must not confine your cooperation to that material assistance. You must create an atmosphere of spiritual affection,



reserved yet sincere, which will be most helpful to the fruitfulness of your priests and of the seminarians in your parish, who may owe the perseverance in their vocation to your understanding kindness.

### **Communitarian Action**

After you have freed your ministers of God by taking charge of the work which belongs to the laity in the plan of ecclesiastical and temporal things, you will not be finished. It is not even enough, although it is of capital importance, to pray for them and with them. The Church expects you *to work along with them in a common apostolate*. In doing so you must avoid excesses in two directions: that of letting your priests do everything themselves, through scrupulousness or timidity on your part, and that of trying to supplant them, even though your intentions are good. If clericalism is an evil, what is called "laicism" is another. Truth lies in the golden mean; in respecting the priest's autonomy wherever it is irreplaceable (in spiritual direction, official preaching, etc.). At the same time one must not hesitate to consider himself, in consequence of his Baptism, as partly responsible for evangelizing the sphere in which he has been put by providence. At the present moment in Our diocese there are two spheres of life particularly needing such intimate cooperation of priests and laity. One is the middle class environment where a certain "paternalism" with respect to the clergy needs to be broken down; the other is the milieu of the working classes where cooperation is more and more necessary to get instruction and spiritual nourishment to the workers.

In large measure it will be through the instrumentality of the family, *through action in the home*, that each of these social spheres will put the priest in the heart of its real life and of its specialized apostolate.

So by taking charge of these things and by participating in the apostolate, the faithful will enable their priests to remain prayerful and generous souls. They will be like flames, consumed themselves by fire and able to inflame other men so as to draw them in their wake to the God of love.

### **3. VOCATIONS**

Now that society throughout the world is disintegrating and taking on new forms, and that there are new waves of paganism, the time has come for the Church not to concede another inch of ground. She must establish authentically Christian groups everywhere to serve as islands of spiritual resistance ordered in a peace-

ful way to the good of mankind. That is one of her most essential constructive tasks. Every Christian ought to feel a responsibility for it, and should have the same serious enthusiasm for it that he has for his own work. However, these dynamic centers which will prevent the world from being rebuilt without the Church, themselves presuppose a more intense nucleus. Here as always we find the priest again.

Unfortunately, we are as likely to find the priest wanting. In France at least, we are short of priests. In revealing this shortage, one must be careful not to paint the statistics too black by compiling or interpreting them over hastily. But even if we assume that this evil is more a menace than an accomplished fact, one figure alone is eloquent enough: every year in France we lose about four hundred priests for whom there are no successors.<sup>255</sup> This is not the place to discuss the favorable signs which compensate for the disheartening effect these statistics would otherwise have. Nor shall we dwell on the very complex causes behind this shrinkage of numbers. Nevertheless everyone knows that one of the primary reasons why our seminaries are not full is the prevailing and organized materialism that surrounds our French youth. Without enumerating the social prejudices which keep even generous souls from the priesthood, one fact stands out: where families are lacking, vocations fall off.

We will here treat the crisis in vocations on two planes only: with respect to the general tone of society and, on a more restricted scale, as it concerns the family.

### **Everyone's Duty**

What is the point of it? To stimulate vocations. But let it be said at the outset that "recruiting for the priesthood" is an equivocal expression. If it is taken to mean a wholesale enlistment it is very dangerous. For it is God and He alone Who calls souls to His service. The priesthood is not chosen from below, it is given gratuitously by the Holy Ghost.

However, grace takes root in a particular nature and in a concrete environment. It allows for and presupposes the action of our free wills. And just as faith comes through teaching, "through hearing" Saint Paul said, so is it with vocations. This is in no way inconsistent with the fact that one is freely called; it merely stresses the human element in the response: "How shall they know, if no one preaches to them?"<sup>256</sup> The work of Christians takes its definition from this. It may, and must, be *a preaching*. In modern terms, *a propaganda offensive*. In these times two conditions will be necessary if it is to succeed.

*Unanimity* first, to create a climate that will offset the secular environment. It should muster all the vital forces of the diocese to hit at the same point. Before a breach can be made a sharp impact is necessary. That presupposes unity and a proportionate cooperation from each person.

The priesthood should then be presented in a *concrete* way, because our times, particularly our youth, take as much to pictures as to ideas. The concept of the priesthood should be brought down to the level of *instructive actions*. Every means should be employed to show the splendor of the priesthood. This does not at all mean stooping to use tricks, which would be unworthy in such a cause, but rather that the truth should be allowed to see the light of day, and be accessible to all.

Literature, the theater, the movies, lectures; all of these should grasp the marvelous role of the priest and arouse the public, both Christians and unbelievers, to an appreciation of it, as art can so well do when it puts itself in the service of an idea. It must be presented in a way adapted to the audience, so that each group will be inspired in the way most natural to it.

### **Duties of Families**

However, the duty of providing the Church with priests falls primarily on the family. Not only because it is to his own parents that, besides life itself, every priest owes the better part of his religious education, but also, because far from being opposed to one another the spirituality of marriage and the priestly ideal complement each other in practice just as they were also associated in Christ's thought.<sup>257</sup> It is true that the emphasis lately placed on the beauty of the Sacrament of Matrimony may have diverted some devout Christians from the service of God. But it is a fact that homes founded on such a high spiritual ideal are the seed of numerous and generous vocations in future generations. It is not by underemphasizing the spirituality of marriage that voluntary celibacy will be exalted. The conclusion is completely otherwise. When the time comes for them to choose their vocations, we must give young people just as enthusiastic a picture of the priesthood as we do of marriage. For that matter experience shows that in the measure that the laity discover and live the marriage state in all its Christian dimensions they realize their need of the priest and call on him to exercise his essential role of spiritual paternity. The ultimate end, the highest summit which the love of two human beings can reach, is to surrender to God for a higher function the son whom He has given them.

## Vocations and Needs of the Church

Such a common effort to get more of those who have vocations to respond to God's call, and more perfectly, should not only have in view the absolute and pre-eminent greatness of the eternal priesthood. It must also be conditioned by the concrete needs of the Church. It is a fact of experience that in our age the need is greatest with respect to the diocesan clergy. It is in the parishes that the scarcity of priests is most acute and threatens to be further aggravated in the next few years. To leave a place without a priest is to deprive God of a living section of the Church. The diocesan clergy constitute the normal structure of the pastoral organization. The organic community is the diocese with its bishop and, to a lesser degree, the parish with the pastor and his assistants. A priestless parish is not a sick parish, it is a dead parish. This is why (We say it boldly in the spirit of loyalty and fraternal esteem, trusting no one will question Our sincerity) the principal effort, at least right now, should be to get vocations to the diocesan clergy. The primary effort, but not the exclusive one. On the contrary, we pray and hope that God will concomitantly multiply religious vocations and grant prosperity to these eminent schools of sanctity and radiating centers of evangelism which are the religious Orders. Not only for the glory of God and the enrichment of the Church but also for the expansion of the scope and areas of cooperation of the apostolate itself. All that we ask, and it is a matter of its salvation, is that somehow or other the diocesan clergy be increased and augmented.

Yet here too we have to face the facts. Many young men turn away from the secular clergy on two accounts. As compared to the religious life they claim it is both too easy, because of the humble nature of its daily tasks and the absence of the three vows, and too difficult, because of its contacts with the life of the world and the loneliness of the life common to country parishes and large city ones.

## Spirituality of the Diocesan Clergy

All Our efforts will be vain unless We can show in theory and in practice that the diocesan ministry is *great* and that it is *possible*. It would take a long time to develop the full proof of this, for which We have not the space here. We cannot even enumerate the various steps of the argument, although this has been made the subject of a fruitful study undertaken at the express request of the French hierarchy. We can only refer to it here.<sup>258</sup>



Neither can we describe here the specific measures which have already been adopted, or are going to be introduced into the daily exercise of the parochial ministry in our own diocese, in the light of these principles tempered by prudent experience. However, by showing how every priest exercises in practice the virtues which are the object of the three vows, We may already have partially overcome the first objection which denies the grandeur of the parochial ministry. As for the second grievance, that it is an *impossible* ministry, it is best answered by the daily life of our priests and by our religious history, especially in recent years. Our clergy has had its heroes and its saints. We know the secret of their virtue, and it calls for no apology. They were native priests who were nurtured from our own soil. Where they were born, they lived. As clerics they chose it, or rather the Holy Ghost chose it for them. As priests they have given themselves to it, mystically united to it, by a sublime contract which binds them with a chain which is dear to them and a duty which transfigures them. Their regard for their roots served to determine their destiny; when the oak falls it is on the spot where it grew.

### **The Privilege of Mothers**

Mothers of families, We appeal to you because you are especially privileged to promote Christ's priestly kingdom. Perhaps you are the mother of a priest. In any case you may become one, and you should desire to do so. When you think the matter over you fear perhaps for your son and for yourself. You dread losing him, you fear that he may waste his life. Whenever you have doubts of this kind, look to her who traced the path for you to follow. Like yourself the Virgin Mary was at first dismayed by the angelic salutation,<sup>259</sup> but once she uttered her *Fiat* her whole life was transformed. Mary could only wait for, desire and offer the one and eternal Priest. She was present at all the events of His life. After having given Him to the world at the nativity, she presented Him to God in the temple. She was still at His side at the Crucifixion. But Jesus rose again and His mother continues in Heaven to intercede for us with Him as mediatrix of grace and pardon. Likewise, oh mothers of this earth, your privileges, although not to be compared with the prodigious one of the Mother of God, also makes you "blessed among women." No greater grace could come to you than to be able to offer to Christ, Who is the sole Mediator of mankind, a voice to become His, hands which will bless and consecrate as His divine hands, flesh to be immolated with Him as an expiatory victim of salvation. May

these ideas become yours! If God speaks to the heart of your child, do not smother that calling in him. The day will come of course when the son you love will leave his father's house to go into the world in search of souls to be saved. You will then suffer in your torn heart and it will be possible to apply to you, in a certain sense, the words of the Prophet: "It is through their wounds that we are healed."<sup>260</sup> However, by giving God the one He asks of you, you will soon realize that he will be returned to you. His heart will know no other love than yours. No son will be closer to you than that one. And your joy will be endless for having presented the Church with a minister and the world with a redeemer. The priestly vocation is a pure gift of God. But it passes through the heart of mothers and that will constitute their greatness and thanksgiving until eternity.

### *Prayers for the Priesthood*

Understand your priests, assist them, and give them to the world. To this threefold duty you must not fail, Beloved Brethren, to add yet another: Pray for your priests. Many never think to do it. They find it quite natural to entrust their intentions to their pastor, chaplain or confessor. It does not enter their heads that just because of their exalted mission and the tremendous weight of misery and sin which men set on their shoulders, priests themselves should be the object of the Church's first intentions. You must not be like these people. You should unite yourselves to the prayers and sacrifices which so many cloisters, monasteries and meritorious hidden souls daily offer up to God for the increase and holiness of the priesthood on earth. Include a particularly fervent petition for priests, religious and missionaries in your thanksgiving after Holy Communion or in the family prayers at night. Include in these prayers also all those who sustain the priesthood through contemplation and penance, all the consecrated souls of the Church who participate, whether actively or mystically, in the duties and powers of the priesthood: clerics, novices and those whom Christian language calls, so truly and beautifully, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ.

# Conclusion

At the beginning of this letter, We asked you, Beloved Brethren, to take a look at the world. We pointed out the terrible alternatives which it faces. On the one hand it is caught in a vortex of discovery and conquest which the Christian is happy to recognize as the legitimate extension of God's creative activity. But on the other hand We cannot restrain Our anguish at seeing a widening gap divide mankind from one end to the other into two hostile camps. On the national and on the international level a growing enmity threatens to develop into open warfare. Minds are already in conflict, the souls of men already closed to each other. While Europe, still bleeding amid its sorrows and ruins, is like a frontier between two worlds or a gaping wound which cannot heal.

That is because the world, and the spirit that pervades it, lacks the very element which it needs to heal itself and to escape catastrophe. It lacks a vitalizing shoot which, if it were grafted on the innermost nature of man who is the artisan of the world, would bring his projects to fruition while elevating him immeasurably and destroying in him whatever is unclean and sinful.

The Church alone can accomplish that task of mediation and conversion. And within the Church it devolves chiefly upon the priest, by his power and by his mission. This letter was addressed to you with a view to stimulating your appreciation of that fact.

We wish, in conclusion, to gather Our ideas around a few *images* which we shall borrow from the Sacrifice of the Mass and the ceremony of ordination. There are certain gestures of the priest that are like symbols of his greatness and his role in the social order in which we live.

## PROSTRATION

The first symbol is the prostration. "All prostrate yourselves," cries the bishop's assistant to those present who are being ordained.<sup>261</sup> And the future priests as one man stretch themselves out on the marble floor of the sanctuary as still and silent as death, a death which the Church has just imposed on them as a duty, a death which astonishes some men, pleases others. The priest is dead! Let us live without him! We have no more need of the priesthood. The City of Man is self-sufficient!

That gesture which annihilates him is renewed every day. For the priest that "death to the world" is not a passing act. It is

an enduring condition, a continuing holocaust. He will always hear the scoffers who ridicule his sacrifice as suicide or folly. He continues to offer himself as a victim, while civilizations pass and men go by like unfeeling or disdainful spectators of his voluntary self-annihilation. A lesson to be remembered: the priest is, and always will be, somehow a dead man among the living.

\* \* \*

Soon afterwards, when the supplication of the litanies has brought the prayers of all the saints down upon them, those who are being ordained, like Peter, James and John after the vision on Mount Thabor, which made them "fall face down on the ground,"<sup>262</sup> rise "and looking all around no longer see anyone but Jesus."<sup>263</sup> Once the consecration of the bishop has made them priests, they set out into the world "transfigured" into the image of Christ, transparent to His beauty, bearers of His divine powers.

They may then be tempted to make use of their power "to cause the fire of Heaven to come down"<sup>264</sup> upon the faithless city so as more quickly and more surely to burn out the universal sinfulness. But Christ will dissuade them from it through the voice of the Church.<sup>265</sup> For if the priest, like Christ, has the mission of driving business and hypocrisy out of the temple, if God has put him on earth "to destroy and sweep clean," he also has "to build and to plant."<sup>266</sup> The Son of God did not call "legions of angels"<sup>267</sup> to help Him. He made Himself a servant and a slave in order to heal and save. So it will be with the priest; he will use his divine power only to be the shepherd of the lost sheep, the healer of wounded souls. Like his Master, he also comes bringing "the sword upon the earth";<sup>268</sup> he also saves through the shedding of blood. But that blood is not the blood of others, it is that of the sole Redeemer with which he mixes his own. As long as there are priests, the blood which baptizes the world will not cease to flow.

### THE ELEVATION

The second symbol comes from the Mass. Holding the Host which he has just consecrated, the priest raises it so that everyone can see it and he can offer it to God in a gesture which expresses all the yearning of his desire and of his prayer. What he offers is no longer bread. It is Jesus Christ, but not Him alone. With Him and by Him Whose place he takes, the priest embraces the world with outstretched arms, supports and raises it up so it can reach God. He offers it His light, warmth, grace and pardon. He shows it to God so He can erase every stain and infirmity. He



begs the Supreme Majesty "not to regard its sins, but the faith of His Church."<sup>269</sup> He reminds the Creator of His creation, the Father of His "children of wrath"<sup>270</sup> that He should make them His "adopted sons."<sup>271</sup> He takes society in his hands to return it to God, to renew its allegiance to Him, to rebuild the path and the bridge. The world may disregard or fight against this priestly gesture. It remains the central expression of their common salvation, the providential shelter from the "wrath to come."

In elevating the Host the priest elevates the world too. He wrests it from its own corruption. He leads it to its highest end, to its fulfillment in the heart of God, purely out of His mercy.

### COMMUNION

God is found. The way to Him is reopened, but God is also given, distributed to us and "eaten"! Toward the end of Mass the priest comes down to the faithful and gives them Holy Communion. What he gives them is not a feeling, a purely earthly affection. It is a Person Who is Love itself. Other people who have been moved by seeing men's animosities and their isolation from each other have tried to reconcile mankind. It is a useful effort but they have merely set up a framework. It has been a fragile structure and even, alas, frequently a dangerous one owing to deceitfulness which has followed the initial fervor. The priest is conscious of these aspirations, these moving efforts toward universal understanding. He approves of them. He promotes them. But he knows they are only outlines and that he holds the only living source of unity in his hands. After deadly wars the leaders of nations clamor for, seek or prepare for, peace but only the priest gives it, really makes it and prolongs it. He goes from person to person, marking the hunger of the earth and filling it, without ever emptying the ciborium. Those men of every race, color and tongue were separated, divided into camps, and enemies to each other before they came into the temple. But the priest at the Holy Table has made them brothers and friends. When they leave the cathedral they will have become a single family. Through Christ, God makes the priest an instrument "to bring together Jews and Gentiles and unite those two flocks together under one and the same Shepherd by the indissoluble bond of charity."<sup>272</sup>

That man who dies so his brothers can live, who washes the world in the blood of Christ and makes it acceptable to the Father, that minister of unity and peace, can anyone say he is a deserter? Civilizations come and go; nations spring up and disappear "with

their might and their glory"; the priesthood does not pass. It perpetuates itself on earth, in humility in its outward appearance, with the nobility of a royal dynasty which has never known an interregnum. The priest is a strange man whom his contemporaries consider archaic but who is always modern and new. He is accused of being reactionary. The truth of the matter is that he is ahead of his time. He looks ahead. He prognosticates. He prepares for the future. He anticipates. He goes beyond all progress and humanism by constantly showing men Christ, the "new Adam,"<sup>273</sup> and begetting them into His transcendent life. But because he speaks the language of eternity he is not considered worth listening to.

People think he is removed from them because he breaks through ordinary conventions. They think he is indifferent because he keeps quiet and is given to meditation, whereas in fact he "considers the whole world as his parish." The ungrateful city ignores the fact that he watches over it.<sup>274</sup> It is unconcerned about the custodian who protects her during the night.<sup>275</sup> It is not grateful to him for giving it life.

This is the eternal paradox of the priest. He is a study in contraries. At the price of his own life he reconciles fidelity to God and fidelity to man. He seems to be poor and weak. And indeed there is nothing weaker than a priest. He has neither political power nor financial resources nor the strength of arms which others use to conquer the earth. His strength consists in being unarmed and "able to do all things in Him Who strengthens him."<sup>276</sup> It consists in going, with an independence which his detachment makes possible, to those who suffer, those who are ignorant, those who fall. There has been nothing more belittled, nothing more misunderstood, nothing more attacked in all history than the priesthood. Yet it is only before a priest that people kneel. Well do they know it, those who would banish God's Church forever from the world! Until the end of time the priest will be the most beloved and the most hated of men, the most incarnate and the most transcendent; their dearest brother and their arch enemy! Until the end of time his mystery which remains a holy enigma even to himself, will outlast world events and civilizations and be the great witness of the invisible kingdom. Priests know that when they go up to the altar for the first time. They are not ignorant of the fact that until death they will be the "sign of contradiction," a light for the children of light, darkness for the sons of the night.

Now We have come to the end and We are back where We started. The priesthood was invented by *Love*. It is *Love* itself, the consummate gift of God.

In the light of Love everything about the priest is clarified. Others in the "human city" have chosen glory, wealth or pleasure. Still others have elected to devote their lives to knowledge, power, or conquest. As for the priest, he has relinquished everything, abandoned all, given all. He waives all possessions, he renounces his own self. But there is one thing which he retains and which nothing can make him relinquish, a good which he tenaciously desires for himself; in the human community he has chosen *Love*. He has elected it in preference to everything else. He wants it for the sake of his brethren who are his only heirs.

This gift which cannot be taken back, this supreme good which resolves the paradox of the priest's nature, is also the secret of his role here below. In his sacred functions everything rests on and everything merges into Love. It is Love which unifies the priest, which constitutes his strength. With that lever he raises the world.

Let the certainty of this fill the souls of our priests. May it spread from them like a contagion! May it give light and life to the Christians. May it become a torment for our unbelieving brethren who are unconsciously affected with a nostalgia to return to the fold!

And may Christ Who alone holds justly the title and the reality of the priesthood deign to confer on His priests on earth and to inspire in those who will come after them, honor, grace, and the joy of saving the world by becoming its ministers of Love!

### PRAYER

"Father, I have made thy name known to the men whom thou hast entrusted to me, chosen out of the world. They belonged to thee, and have become mine through thy gift, and they have kept true to thy word. . . . It is for these I pray . . . Holy Father, keep them . . . that they may be one as we are one. . . . I have given them thy message, and the world has nothing but hatred for them, because they do not belong to the world. . . . I am not asking that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil. . . . Thou has sent me into the world on thy errand, and I have sent them into the world on my errand . . . that they may be dedicated through the truth.

"It is not only for them I pray; I pray for those who are to find faith in me though their word . . . that they too may be one in us . . . so that the love thou hast bestowed upon me may dwell in them."

(John 17, 1 etc.)

Given at Paris, under Our Signature, sealed with Our Coat of Arms and the Counter-signature of the Chancellor of Our Archdiocese, on Maundy Thursday, April 14, 1949, on the Feast of the Lord's Supper.

† *Emmanuel Kard. Suhard*  
*arches. de Paris*

EMMANUEL, CARDINAL SUHARD  
*Archbishop of Paris*

By Order of His Eminence  
ERNEST MERESSE  
*Canon Titular, Chancellor*

Translated by Lucien Bégin, Carol Jackson, and Rev. Joseph Lamontagne, S.S.S.





## Appendix

1. John 1, 11.  
 2. This doctrine may seem abstract and difficult to understand. In fact, it is not astonishing that the faithful are not accustomed to it, for what they know mainly of the Scriptures are the Gospels. Now, not on a single occasion does Our Lord claim for Himself, throughout these, that title of Priest. The other writings, and the Epistles in particular, rarely allude to it. One has to wait until the last of the Pauline Epistles, that to the Hebrews, to find this essential doctrine expounded *ex professo*.

What is the reason for this silence? The express intention of Our Lord and of the first Apostles. For the priesthood which existed at that time was the Levitic priesthood. Its members represented the priesthood of Aaron which had by reason of its institution by God through Moses a solid claim to exist. But following the coming of Christ, it lost its meaning since the Son of God had come to replace the bloody—and necessarily inefficacious—sacrifices by the only perfect sacrifice: that of Calvary. To have compared this new priesthood with the ancient and outmoded one which was, moreover, discredited by the cupidity and sectarianism of the Levites, would have appeared as a contradiction coming from the lips of the Messias, Bearer of the Good Tidings, and a blasphemy from the mouth of the Apostles.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not contradict this interpretation. For if it be true that he bases his sublime theology of Christ's priesthood on a comparison with the Levitic sacrifices, it is solely to demonstrate how the New Covenant surpasses and abrogates the Old Dispensation. But the most fundamental reason is much simpler. If the sacred authors do not emphasize the priesthood of Christ, it is because it already forms part of the redeeming Incarnation which is the only substance of their preaching. The title of priest does not require being added to Christ; it is already included therein.

3. I John 4, 8.
4. Offertory of the Mass.
5. John 14, 6.
6. Enarr. in Psalm CX 3.—P.L. 37, 1459.
7. Galtier, *De Incarnatione et Redemptione*, p. 424.
8. Tanquerey, *Dogmas générateurs de la piété*, p. 455 and foll.
9. Berulle's works, Préface, p. 103.
10. Bourgoing, *Méditations sur les*

*vérités et excellences de N.—S.J.—C.*, t. I, p. 188, quoted by Pourrat, "Le Sacerdoce," p. 28.

10. Mersch, E. *Morality and the Mystical Body*, p. 140.

11. Salet, S.J., G., *Le Christ notre Vie*, Casterman, 1937, p. 53.

12. Heb. 5, 1 and 4, 6.

13. Bonsirven, *Épître aux Hébreux*, pp. 40-41 and 267.

14. Heb. 10, 5, 7.

15. Psalm 109, 3. "Jesus is Man... this man is God. There lies His investiture into the priesthood... The divine word which institutes Him priest for mankind was that which, in the Incarnation, raised human nature up to God... and caused it to enter into the person of the Word...: *Tu es sacerdos in aeternum*. That utterance, indeed, which made of God a man and of man God, made of that God-Man the Mediator between God and mankind, the born-Priest Who gives God to men and men to God." (P. Bouëssé, O. P., *Théologie et Sacerdoce*, p. 97).

16. Mersch, E., loc. cit., p. 141.

17. "In contradistinction to the priests of the Old Dispensation who, being men, had to replace one another and who, being sinners, could only offer to God imperfect sacrifices, Our High Priest is unique because He is eternal and His sacrifice is equally unique because it remits all the sins of the world and constitutes the final act of religion" (Bardy, Supplement to *La Vie Spirituelle*, April-May 1936).

18. Heb. 7, 25.

19. *Encyclical Mediator Dei*, p. 19.

20. John 20, 21.

21. John 3, 17.

22. Charmot, S. J., P. *Le Sacrement de l'Unité*, p. 114.

23. Luke 19, 14.

24. It should be noted that the Epistle to the Hebrews makes no mention of the Eucharist in its doctrinal structure; for, indeed, that was not involved in the plan of its demonstration. Such silence shows, however, that the hypothesis may legitimately be made whereby the sacerdotal character of Jesus Christ is established solely on the hypostatic union.

25. Salet, G., loc. cit., p. 53.

26. Masure, *Pretres Diocésains*, p.

27. The author develops in some excellent pages the following distinction and correlation: "The concept of priesthood transcends, in time and metaphysically, that of sacrifice. Priesthood is

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lasting, it is a status. Sacrifice is performed and consummated, it is an act. And yet, although priesthood logically precedes sacrifice in order to render the latter feasible, how effective would a priesthood be which would never be exercised in the offering and immolation of a victim? . . . It is that by which it shows itself, realizes itself and . . . in a certain way . . . passes from potentiality to actuality."

27. Masure, *Pretres diocesains*, pp. 27-28.

28. Heb. 7, 25.

29. As early as in Exodus (19,5-6), God announces His plans for Israel, figure of the Church: "If you observe my covenant, you shall be my people, set aside from all other nations . . . for all the earth is mine; but you, you shall be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Isaias (61, 5) is still more precise: "You shall be called priests of Yahweh, you shall be named 'ministers of our God.'"

30. "You have redeemed by Your blood men of all tribes and of every nation . . . and You have made them kings and priests" (5. 10). See also Apocalypse 1, 6 and 20, 6.

31. I Peter 2, 5 and 9.

32. Saint Justin puts the faithful in "the true race of God's archpriests" (Justin, c. Tryph. CXVI, 3). Saint Augustine, in commenting on Psalm XXVI, clearly asserts it: "It is not only the Head which has been anointed, but the body as well, and we are the body . . . Jesus incorporates us in Him, makes us His members so that in Him we may also be Christ. Whence does the unction, which constitutes king and priest, belong to all Christians. . ." (Enarr. Ps. XXVI, II, 2). Origen also indicates how the Christian belongs to "the sacerdotal race" and must therefore "offer to God the host of his prayers" (in Levit. Homil. LXI). Saint Leo mentions "the people of divine adoption which is, in the aggregate, sacerdotal and royal." And explains it thus: "As the Apostle said, we are all one in Christ . . . in the unity of faith and of Baptism, the community is indivisible, the dignity extends to all in accordance with the words of the holy Apostle Peter. (Here he quotes I Peter 2, 5-9). . . All those who were regenerated in Christ are consecrated priests by the unction of the Holy Ghost. . . . So that, in "the whole body of the Church is celebrated the unique mystery of priesthood which, following the ef-

fusion of the blessed unction, was imparted more abundantly to the upper parts but which also flowed unsparingly on the rest of the body." (Sermon IV L.P.L. 54. 148).

33. Session XXIII, can. 1, 8.

34. *Mediator Dei*, page 34. This doctrine of the character is classical in theology. Notwithstanding its abstract nature, it might serve a useful purpose to expound it briefly here for the benefit of those of our lay faithful who like to find in theology a basis for dedicating themselves.

The existence of a priestly character is defined by the Council of Trent (Session VII, can. 9): Three Sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, imprint a character on the soul, that is to say a spiritual and indelible sign by virtue of which those Sacraments cannot be repeated.

Far from innovating, the Council merely summed up a sacramental doctrine and practice fifteen centuries old. The Greek and Latin Fathers compare those three Sacraments to the image of a sovereign on a coin, to a badge of military service or to the property mark by which a master brands his sheep.

That mark makes the soul like God and, more particularly, like the Word made flesh. That transforming impression, although, like grace, a sign of God's gratuitous benevolence, is nevertheless distinct from it: grace may be lost; the character remains forever even in the apostate or in the sinner just as the stigma remains on the deserted soldier.

That seal, which is both a sign of identification and an image of Christ is represented by Saint Thomas as being a participation in Christ's priestly power: "*Character sacramentalis specialiter est character Christi, cujus sacerdotio configurantur fideles secundum sacramentales characteres qui nihil aliud sunt quam quedam participationes sacerdotii Christi ab ipso Christo derivatae*" (III, Q. 63, 3).

The character impressed by those three Sacraments only—which explains why they alone cannot be given twice—is not an indeterminant participation in Christ's priesthood; but a participation in that priesthood precisely as it is manifested under the New Law: "*per quodam sacramenta, quae characterem imprimunt, homo sanctificatur quodam consecratione, utpote deputatus ad cultum divinum*" (IIIa, Q. 63 a. 6 ad 2).

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*Consecratione, deputatus*, these two terms indicate the double effect of the character. It *consecrates*, that is, it separates the person from the world and the Devil (Q. 63a. 3 ad 3), and reserves him for God by an internal transformation of his soul. And it does so while conferring a capacity, a "power of being subjects or ministers, that is to say the instruments, of the sacerdotal power which Jesus Christ the Sovereign Priest shall exercise in them and by them: . . . *deputatur quisque fidelis ad recipiendum vel tradendum aliis ea quae pertinent ad cultum Dei*" (Q. 63, a. 3). They therefore became, in varying degrees depending upon the character received, like members in which and through which Jesus Christ, the invisible Head of the Church operates." (Moureau, *Dic. Theol.* col. 1704.)

It is by virtue of this fact that those who have been baptized may be ministers of two of the Sacraments: of Baptism, exceptionally; of Matrimony, regularly. It is also on this account that they may dialogue the Divine Office with the priest without the latter being obliged to repeat the texts thus alternated.

Theology here finds again the teachings of Scriptures and Tradition. For example: "Let no one eat or drink of our Eucharist save the baptized in the name of the Lord" (Didachus IX, 5. Cf. Ephes. 5, 12, 16; 4, 30).

It is by virtue of this character that one becomes qualified to participate validly in Christian worship, in the liturgy of the redemption. "*Character importat quamdam potentiam spiritualem ordinatam ad ea quae sunt divini cultus*" (Q. 63, a. 2).

In the second part, we shall explain more precisely apropos of the Mass, the distinction between the powers of those baptised in respect to worship, and the powers of the priests and bishops.

35. Cf. Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* of Pius XI (Roman Breviary, feria II, infra octavam Sacratissimi Corporis Jesu, Lectio VI).

36. "*Ordo potestatem principaliter importat*" *Summa Theol.* Supplement Q. 4, a. 2 ad 2.

37. *Traite des Saints Ordres*, III, a. 2.

38. I Tim. 4, 14; II. Tim. 1, 6.

39. *Mediator Dei*, page 35.

40. "The priest acts for the people only because he represents Jesus Christ, who is Head of all His members and offers Himself in their stead. Hence he

goes to the altar as the minister of Christ, inferior to Christ but superior to the people. The people, on the other hand, since they in no sense represent the Divine Redeemer and are not a mediator between themselves and God, can in no way possess the sacerdotal power" (*Mediator Dei*, page 33).

This was very aptly put (*Mediator Dei*, Edition du Vitrail, page 37, Note 8) by the Pope in a "particularly illuminative argument: the priest is the representative of the people not because he owes his priesthood to popular delegation but because he represents the person of Our Lord Who contains and encompasses in Himself the whole body of the baptized. That sacerdotal power proceeds exclusively from above." (Italics are Cardinal Suhard's.)

As for the expression "sacerdotal right," it is obviously used here as referring to plenary priesthood. For, as we have already seen, the encyclical elsewhere states that the faithful "participate, according to their condition, in the priesthood of Christ" (page 34, sect. 88).

41. It shows how there can be no opposition between the authority of the Church and her inspiration by the Holy Ghost. "The reason which led our Divine Redeemer to give to the community of men He founded the constitution of a Society, perfect of its kind and containing all the juridical and social elements—namely, that He might perpetuate on earth the saving work of redemption—was also the reason why He willed it to be enriched with the heavenly gifts of the Paraclete. . . . There can, then, be no real opposition or conflict between the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit and the juridical commission of Ruler and Teacher received from Christ, since they mutually complement and perfect each other—as do the body and soul in man. . . . (*Mystici Corporis*, pages 25-26).

42. Perinelle, op. cit., page 237.

43. *Mediator Dei*, pages 18, 19.

44. The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (page 10) makes an extremely suggestive comparison between the two social Sacraments of the Church, Holy Orders and Matrimony: "For the social needs of the Church Christ has provided in a particular way by the institution of two other Sacraments. Through Matrimony . . . provision is made for the external and duly regulated increase of Christian society. . . . Through Holy Orders men

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are set aside and consecrated to God, to offer the Sacrifice of the Eucharistic Victim, to nourish the flock of the faithful with the Bread of Angels and the food of doctrine, to guide them in the way of God's commandments and counsels, and to strengthen them with all other supernatural helps." Cf. also *Sum. Theol.* IIIa Q. 65, a 1, c.

45. Theology sums up the powers of the priest in two essential prerogatives: the power of orders and the power of jurisdiction. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas and the majority of theologians, the power of jurisdiction stems from the power of Orders. "According to Saint Thomas, the sacerdotal power has for its primary object the dispensing of the Eucharist . . . for it does not contain only a potency derived from Christ but Christ Himself. . . . It is, moreover, the Sacrament of Christ's Sacrifice . . . Secondly—and as subordinated to that primary object—it (the spiritual power of Orders) extends to the Mystical Body of Christ in order to prepare it to receive the Eucharist" (Perinelle, op. cit. opusc. 238).

Scripture, on the contrary, seems rather to assign precedence to the power of jurisdiction. The official Code of Canon Law also quotes, in first place, the power of jurisdiction: "Orders separates in the Church, by institution of Christ, the clerics from the laity to govern the faithful and carry out the divine worship" (Can. 948).

It is in no wise our intention to voice an opinion in this controversy concerning the primacy of the power of Orders and the power of jurisdiction. What really matters here is to emphasize the indissoluble bonds which unite these two powers in the same person in God's ministers.

46. In Christ "all is reconciled! His historical Sacrifice and His historical priesthood, through His sacramental Sacrifice and His sacramental priesthood, are prolonged and receive their plenitude in a mystical Sacrifice and a mystical priesthood. And all this does not go forth from Him; everywhere He is Himself, but everywhere differently; here inasmuch as He is Chief, there in an efficacious sign, there again in His members, but nowhere is He divided" (Mersch, Op. Cit. p. 160).

47. I John 1, 1.

48. *Summa Theol.* IIIa, Q. 22 a. 4 c.

49. *Adv. Marcionem* IV, 9.

50. Mersch, op. cit., page 142.

51. I Cor. 4, 1.

52. Encyclical *Ad Catholicos Sacerdotes*, p. 8.

53. "A sacramental presence is not here involved: the substance of the man has not disappeared; it has not been changed into the substance of Christ. . . . The priest is a consecrated ambassador (Charmot, *Le Sacrement de l'Unité*, page 164, note 1).

54. *Ad Catholicos Sacerdotes*, p. 8.

55. Saint Augustine, Tract. 6 in Joann. Ante med.

56. *De Sacramentis*, Lib. IV, Cap. IV.

57. Mersch, op. cit., page 154.

58. It should be recalled that, by virtue of divine institution, the simple priest belongs to the hierarchy of Orders, and not to that of jurisdiction which comprises but "the Supreme Pontificate and subordinated Episcopate" (Code, Canon 108, 3). However, the tie of origin between simple priesthood and Episcopate is so intimate that it cannot be said of the simple priest that he is purely and simply alienated from divinely imparted power of jurisdiction.

59. Subject to reserves stipulated in the preceding note.

60. Heb. 7, 26.

61. Mersch, op. cit., page 154.

62. Psalm 109, 4. Those words which apply in proper to Christ, may also be applied to the priest of the New Covenant, whose character is indelible.

63. Strictly speaking, the bishop only partakes of Christ's royalty in his governing functions, since only the jurisdiction which belongs to him is of divine institution. (See Note 58 above.)

64. *Summa Theol.* IIIa, Q. 22, I Q. 26, 2.

65. Heb. V. 1-5.

66. Or a permanent one, but of an auxiliary character only; such as the Guardian Angel.

67. Tobias 5, 20, 6, 4; John 5, 4.

68. The miracles performed by the holy Curé of Ars and by so many other priests do not invalidate this rule; they proceed from the sanctity of those servants of God and not from their priesthood considered as such.

69. Psalm 129, 1.

70. *Mystici Corporis*, page 18.

71. Acts 8, 8-11.

72. John 18, 36.

73. Phil. 2, 6.

74. I Peter 2, 21.

75. Ibid. 2, 9.

76. Nietzsche, *Zarathoustra*.



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77. Charmot, op. cit., page 164.
78. Ibid. page 167.
79. Heb. 5, 1-4.
80. St. Gregory of Nysse, or. in bapt. (P. G. XLVI, 581).
81. John 17, 16.
82. Deut. 10, 8-9.
83. Ps. 15, 5.
84. I Cor. 7, 31.
85. Gal. 6, 14.
86. *Laetus obtuli universa* I Par. 29, 7.
87. John 15, 15.
88. *Ad Catholicis Sacerdotii*, p. 6.
89. I Cor. 10, 31.
90. Acts, 14, 14.
91. Deut. 9, 9-11; 25; 10, 1, 10.
- etc.
92. Acts 6, 4.
93. Saint Gregory, Hom. III in Evang.
94. Isaias, 58, 1.
95. II Cor. 2, 17.
96. John 18, 37; 15, 26-27; 1, 7.
97. I Thess. 2, 4-7.
98. II Tim. 2, 9.
99. Ps. 103, 4.
100. Luke 12, 49.
101. Mark 10, 34.
102. Ps. 104, 16.
103. Acts 26, 16. Cf. 1, 8.
104. "Prior to acting as representative of the community before the throne of God, the priest is the ambassador of the Divine Redeemer. He is God's vicegerent in the midst of his flock precisely because Jesus Christ is Head of the Body of which Christians are the members. The power entrusted to him, therefore, bears no natural resemblance to anything human. It is entirely supernatural. It comes from God. 'As my Father hath sent me, I also send you' (John 20, 21). . . 'go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' (Mark 16. 15-16)" (*Mediator Dei*, page 19).
105. It is always the priestly character from which these conclusions are derived. "While it is a reality, the priestly character also is an *efficacious sign*. . . It marks and distinguishes the ministers of Christ-the-Priest. Whenever it operates (as at the consecration, or example) it renders sacramentally present, under the sign of the celebrant, Christ's priesthood." What happens is that "Christ becomes priest in a sacramental manner and not in the natural manner in which He was so on Calvary.

He is priest inasmuch as He is made present by the power of the character of Holy Orders in the human priest, and because He acts through the human priest; in other words, if sacramental priesthood did not exist in the Church, there could not be any sacramental sacrifice. If Christ, as He now exists in His human nature, that is to say in glory, were directly to perform the Holy Sacrifice, a correspondence between the priest and the Victim would be wanting since the former would be in a natural state and the latter in a sacramental one." (Dom Vonier, "The Key to Eucharistic Doctrine," page 239.)

106. Matt. 8, 20.

107. Of course celibacy is not of itself necessary to the priesthood. It is not of divine institution but of ecclesiastical institution only. It became general, in the West, only from the fifth century on. In the East, more specifically in that branch of the Eastern Church in communion with Rome, which is the only one we have here in mind, the existence of a married clergy has lasted until today except for the bishops, who are chosen from among the monks. But the case of the Eastern Church, which is sometimes held up as an argument against clerical celibacy in the Latin Church, provides on the contrary new support for the Western custom; for more and more Eastern priests and seminarians are giving up marriage of their own accord for the reasons we have outlined above. However, it does not matter what conclusion can be drawn from a comparison with our Catholic brethren of the Eastern Church, the important point to emphasize is the exact doctrine in the matter; there does not exist theoretically or historically, any essential incompatibility between the priesthood, which is a power and a function, and Matrimony, which is a state in life, and a highly sanctifying one for that matter. Still, in view of psychological and sociological laws, there is, in practice, a fittingness and, as it were, a "pre-established harmony" between divine investiture and the total consecration, soul and body, of the minister.

One can thus see how both the doctrine and the practice of the Church are consonant with Saint Paul's famous and explicit teaching on the superiority of the state of virginity over that of matrimony (I Cor. 7, 25). His teaching merely echoes what Our Lord Himself said (Matt. 19, 12; 22, 30).

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108. "Our chastity is not a mutilation, nor is it a random vestige of a primitive civilization but on the contrary, a mighty bridgehead toward the future; it has endowed an eschatological value for it draws the present world, wherein we remain, toward that future world of which we already form a part." (Gray, "Amour sacerdotal et chastete," *Masses Ouvrieres*, August 1948, p. 16.)

109. Ps. 46, 3; Cant. 6, 3.

110. *Exorcistam oportet abjicere daemones.* (Pontifical, ordination of exorcists.)

111. *Exorcismos faciat cum imperio et auctoritate.* . . . (Ritual).

112. Matt. 13, 25.

113. Sermon, 10, in Nov. Sermon.

114. John 15, 18.

115. Ps. 69, 5; John 15, 25.

116. Gal. 1, 10.

117. John 15, 19-20.

118. Isaias LIII, 3-7.

119. Wisdom 2, 10.

120. Isaias LIII, 4-10 sq.

121. John 15, 13.

122. Heb. 7, 3.

123. Matt. 5, 45.

124. Thus was Father de Foucauld wont to designate himself.

125. I Peter 5, 3.

126. I Cor. 1, 23.

127. John 2, 25.

128. Hebrew 5, 2.

129. Bossuet, *Meditations sur l'Evangile*, 25th day.

130. Acts 6, 2.

131. I Cor. 9, 20-22.

132. Ephes. II, 14.

133. Albert de Mun, quoted by Brugerette, *Le Pretre Francais et la societe contemporaine*, III, 35.

134. Gen. I, 28.

135. Pius XII, Consistorial Address, February 20, 1946.

136. *Cooperatores ordinis nostri* (Pontifical, Ordination of Priests).

137. "In reality, if you study them carefully, the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are the very ones which confer among other obligations that of the apostolate, that is to say, of spiritual aid to our neighbors. Indeed, through Confirmation one becomes a soldier of Christ. And through (Baptism) . . . we become members of the Church, that is to say, of Christ's Mystical Body. Among the members of that Body . . . there must exist a community of interests, a mutual exchange of life . . . one member must help the other; none may remain inactive; each re-

ceives and each must, in turn, give" (Pius XI, Letter to the Patriarch of Lisbon).

138. "It is imperative that laymen, one way or another, assume their share of the Church's hierarchical apostolate. Taught by priests who also attend to their spiritual formation, and living the Christian life integrally, laymen must prepare the way for the penetration of the light of Truth and the sanctifying action of grace into areas which are remote from the Church or hostile to her action. . . . From this it is apparent that the task of these laymen is, in a certain sense, the very same mission as that of the sacred hierarchy and of Jesus Christ, that is, to obtain the supernatural life for other men, to nourish it in them and to safeguard it. Consequently, their activity is an invaluable aid and a necessary complement to the priestly ministry. And it is because of this fact that, right from the beginning of Our Pontificate, We have extended to the hierarchy and to the faithful a paternal appeal that the faithful be suitably prepared and organized with a view to the apostolate which We defined *the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy* and which we have called *Catholic Action* (in italics in the text)" (Pius XI, Letter to the Episcopate of the Philippines, January 18, 1939).

139. "The Church consists first of all of the faithful . . . the laity, the Christian people . . . the clergy have no reason for existence except in the community, to direct it, to protect it spiritually, and to watch over it. The clergy exist for the people and not the people for the clergy. Without the people the clergy is inconceivable; it is rooted in the community, therein it takes its form and develops. The first state of a Christian, the usual one, is to be a lay person; the priest is only a layman who has become a priest. . . . The Christian fold is the nurturing ground of the Church; it is to the laity that everything is ultimately referred and on which everything depends. . . . (Chan. Leclercq, *La Vie du Christ dans l'Eglise*, page 185).

140. In Ev. Jo. tract. 51, 15 sq., Pius XII, Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*, D.O. December 5, 1939.

141. Numerous texts of Pius XII concerning Catholic Action, explicitly or tacitly refer to the doctrine in I Cor. 12:4-30, touching the structure of the Mystical Body and the mutual dependency of

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the members with respect to the Head as well as to one another.

142. At least on the plane of the apostolate which we are discussing at the moment. For the Sacrifice of the New Law, as we shall point out again later, is Christ Himself (and therefore the priest who, by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, is His sole "instrument") Who performs the Sacrifice.

143. Matt. 20, 17-28.

144. Regarding the jurisdiction of the simple priest, see above Note 58.

145. "*Cuique coetui praesident sacerdotes, altari, sacrificio, sacramentis, exhortationibus, correctionibus, concioni, catechesi, divinis praeconiis et quibusque aliis ecclesiasticis officiis ac sacris exhortationibus, ut omnia, sicut ait Apostolus, in Ecclesia cum ordine fiant. Ergo praeesse in Ecclesia, absente Episcopo, debet quibusque officiis, proprium Presbyteri munus est*" (Catalanus, Pontific. om.).

146. Pius XII, Letter to the French Biscopate, March 4, 1945.

147. Pius XI, Apostolic Letter to the Biscopate of the Philippine Islands, January 18, 1939.

148. The opposition between the faithful on the one hand, who allegedly hold charismatic powers, and the Holy Spirit and the hierarchy on the other hand, which is only a juridical institution, added later and without life of its own, is contrary to sacred Scripture, to history and to experience.

149. "The motherhood of the Church in the strict sense pertains not to the whole community, but to those persons endowed with the fruitfulness and the pastoral power by which the children of the Church are begotten, cared and guided. In a word, it belongs to the Fathers of the Church. We call them "Fathers" because of their natural character, which in conformity with propriety is demanded by Christ for the carrying out of the higher offices in the Church. But if their function in the Church is considered formally according to its supernatural side, and if attention is focussed on their dignity rather than on their persons, they obviously have a paternal character. Thus viewed, their persons are seen in a special way to be added to the God-man in His Holy Spirit: they are persons through whom the God-man begets, rears and educates his children, as the father of the family acts through the mother" (Sheeben,

*The Mysteries of Christianity*, pp. 555 and 556).

150. I Thess., 2, 7-8.

151. I Cor. 4, 1 Cf. Tit. I, 7, translated in the Vulgate as "*Dei dispensatorem*."

152. Acts 6, 4.

153. Acts 6, 4.

154. John 4, 24.

155. Letter from His Holiness Pius XII to the Minister General of the Capuchin Friars, D. C., December 4, 1948.

156. Cf. also II Cor. 4, 20 sq.; Phil. 2, 17.

157. And federated units. May We here state again the importance We attach to deaneries or federations of priest-worker groups, that is, to a group of parish units corresponding to real social entities such as a city district, suburb, industrial center, geographical section, etc. A cooperatively undertaken movement conducted by priest and lay teams working closely together and, moreover, fully autonomous within its own territory, seems the only means of solving the problem posed by modern living conditions, from the point of view of getting information, of starting religious and social projects, of mutual assistance, whether material and intellectual, etc.

158. *Masses Ouvrieres*, July 1948. Joint editorial, "Catholic Mission and Action," page 4.

159. Although this subject is one of the most vital and essential ones for contemporary theology. Happily, many efforts are being made in various countries to elaborate it. They already deserve to be encouraged and watched.

160. Gen. I, 28.

161. "It is the Creator of all things Who has instilled in the heart of man the irresistible yearning to find, even here on earth, a meet happiness, and Catholicism approves all man's just efforts for true civilization as well as for legitimate progress toward the perfection and growth of mankind" (Pius XI, *Caritate Compulsi*, May 3, 1932). "It would be to interpret wrongly Our statements against materialism to infer from them a condemnation of technical progress. No. We do not condemn that which is a gift of God, Who . . . has hidden in the bowels . . . of the soil, in the days of the creation of the world, treasures . . . that the hand of man should draw from for his needs . . . for his progress" (Pius XII, Radio Message, Christmas 1941), etc.

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162. Ephes. I, 10.  
163. Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, Bonne-Presses Edition.

164. Pius XII, Christmas message, 1942.

165. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*.

166. "The Church cannot shut herself up passively in the seclusion of her temples and so abandon the duty entrusted to her by Divine Providence of forming the integral man. . . ." (Pius XII, *Address to the New Cardinals*, February 20, 1946). "To work then and labor, Beloved Sons . . . do not remain idle amid the ruins. Extricate yourselves from them in order to reconstruct a new social world for Christ. . . ." (Pius XII, Christmas 1943). Be not only "present in the world," but "progress." "There can be no question for a Christian, who looks at history with the spirit of Christ, of returning to the past but only of the duty to advance toward the future and to surpass one's self" (Pius XI, May 13, 1942).

167. Letter of His Holiness Pius XII to Canon Cardijn, Chaplain-general of the J.O.C., March 21, 1949.

168. "The common good . . . cannot . . . find its foundation in the material prosperity of society but rather in the harmonious development and natural perfection of man, for which purpose the Creator has designed society as a means" (Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus*, "Spes" Edition, No. 47).

169. "In the same way," wrote Pius XI, "that people in the same neighborhood are drawn together into a community, so nature inclines members of the same trade or profession, whatever it is, to create corporative associations, so much so that many consider such associations as organisms which are if not essential to, at least natural in, society" (*Quadragesimo Anno*, "Spes" Edition, page 90).

170. "Te nationum praesides—Honores tollant publico,—Colant magistri, iudices—Leges et artes exprimant. To Thee may the rulers of nations—Pay public homage!—May they honor Thee, masters and judges,—May the laws and arts manifest Thee! (Feast of Christ the King, Vespers Hymn).

171. Letter of His Holiness Pius XII to Canon Cardijn, March 21, 1949.

172. "Let no member of the clergy imagine that such action (that of missionary to workers) is foreign to the priestly ministry, on the grounds that it belongs to the order of economics:

for it is precisely in that order that the eternal salvation of souls is in jeopardy (Letter of the Holy Congregation of the Council to Msgr. Lienart, quoting Benedict XV's letter to the Bishop of Bergamo).

173. John 8, 34.

174. John 12, 31; 14, 30; 16, 1 I Cor. 2, 6; etc.

175. Luke 4, 6.

176. Rom. 16, 20.

177. I Pet. 5, 8-9.

178. Gen. 3, 1.

179. John, Ch. 17.

180. Ephes. I, 10.

181. Coloss. I, 15.

182. Coloss. I, 20.

183. I John 1, 3.

184. Gen. 1, 31.

185. Coloss. 3, 9-10; Cf. Rom. 7.

186. Cf. A. de Soras, *Neutralité Laïcisme*, page 121 et seq.

187. I Thess. 5, 21.

188. Mark, 6, 7.

189. I Cor. 13, 8.

190. John 4, 8.

191. And of a newly-born as well for although he has not committed actual sin he is, in a certain manner, under Satan's power until the original blot has been washed away.

192. Ritual of the Baptism of adults.

193. Rom. 8, 20, 21.

194. "At the instant the Word was made flesh the divine power was in a certain manner carried into the heart of the material universe to revive, transform and sanctify it. It is not only the human nature of Christ but also the whole of the material universe which was thus invited to participate in a divinity theretofore unheard of. For if the Incarnation it is the Body of Christ which is involved, in the Sacraments there are other material elements, mineral, vegetable, or human: water, bread, wine, oil, our physical actions and human words, which become instruments of the spirit of God. It is henceforth to be said that the earth which had previously provided man only with his corporeal life and food, now appears in the Sacraments as purveyor of spiritual life and nurture" (Journef, *Hierarchie Apostolique*, page 121).

195. The power of blessing belongs to God only. He Himself blessed the whole of creation (Gen. I, 22-23), the Noah, etc. But he soon conferred power on men; first to fathers of families and to kings and soon thereafter to the priesthood only. (Cf. Num. 23, 27)



## Appendix

The Gospels relate many a blessing Christ's on persons and things: Children (Matt. 19, 13-15), Apostles (Luke 24, 50), loaves and fishes (Matt. 14, 13-21), etc. That power of achieving divine effects through human gestures Christ endowed on his disciples (Matt. 28, 12-13). From the time of the Acts of the Apostles the Church can be seen exercising that power.

In the mind of the Fathers, the power of blessing is one with the power of the mandate of the Church to sanctify the world. . . . The Church claims that power as a prerogative of her priesthood. . . . The *Apostolic Constitutions* forbid men to bless. . . . The priest is minister of God and, through the priestly blessing, it is the divine favor itself that descends." (P. Beillevert, "Catholicism," art. Benediction, col. 1406).

196. "Let every thing that they shall bless, be blessed; let everything which they shall consecrate, be consecrated and sanctified in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (Pontifical).

"Cum Sacerdotes consecrantur ut sint participes Christi ministri et dispensantes Mysteriorum Dei; ac praeterea, cum benedictiones dispensatur gratiae et operis Dei. merito Ecclesia adnexuit Ordini Presbyteratus munus benedicens, ut soli Sacerdotes sint ministri benedictionum: quare, cum ordinatur Sacerdos, eiusque manus consecrantur, sic ei fitur ab Episcopo consecrate: Ut nequique benedixerint, benedicant." (Catalanus, Pontificale Romanum).

197. Pelagius was refuted by Saint Augustine, then in 416 by the Bishop of Carthage. Regarding the errors of Protestantism, the Council of Trent has set forth the value of blessings (Denz. edition 24-25, n. 93 and 943).

198. Gen. 1, 12.

199. The Code of Canon Law (Canon 1148) divides the blessings, from the point of view of their effects, into two classes: so-called constitutive blessings which can be called consecrations, confer on persons, objects or places thus blessed a kind of sacred character, by which they are withdrawn from ordinary use and assigned to divine worship. . . . As for example the consecration of Virgins, of a church, of sacred vessels, etc. . . . (Mangenot, D. art. Benediction, col. 632).

Simple blessings, on the contrary, "are occasions whereby the sacred minister declares God to grant to the persons and

objects thus blessed some spiritual or temporal advantage *without those persons or things* becoming holy or sacred and *changing their status from a religious point of view*" (Id. col. 636).

These latter are the ones we have here in mind. As stated above, the priest is not the magic dispenser of blessings but their minister; that is to say, the rite which he performs produces its effect "by virtue of the prayer of the Church"; but he remains the judge in each case of whether or not it should be performed.

Thus understood in their use and especially in the context of the Church which is the "Sacrament of Christ," blessings cannot help but contribute to the purification or spiritualizing of man's relations with the things of earth and to show that nothing is vulgar or unworthy of God and that the things of nature and the achievements of civilization can participate in the coming of the kingdom. They foster in man the religious sense of the universe and tend to characterize in their own way every epoch of Christendom" (Beillevert, op. cit. col. 1409).

200. I Tim. 4, 4-5.

201. See pages 11 and 12 regarding the bonds which unite the Sacrifice of Calvary to the priesthood which Christ possesses by His nature owing to the hypostatic union.

202. Col I, 20.

203. Pius XI, Encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* p. 5.

204. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, p. 166. These quotations refer directly only to the Graeco-Roman empire. But they may analogically and subject . . . to allowance for differences of religion, or origin, of gods, etc. be applied to all known historical societies.

205. Fustel de Coulanges, op. cit., pages 193, 194.

206. H. Bergson, Letter of thanks to Norway for instituting the Nobel Prize, December 12, 1928. Concept resumed in *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, page 335.

207. E. Renan, "Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse," Nelson Edition, page 204.

208. Fustel de Coulanges, op. cit., page 173.

209. Berulle, "De l'état et des grandeurs de Jesus," Second Oration, p. 129.

210. Olier, *Traite des Saints-Ordres*, III, 6.

211. *Mediator Dei*, pages 12 and 32.

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212. *Mediator Dei*, page 12. Saint Thomas pointed out that "religion consists, first of all, in interior acts which of themselves form its basis. Secondly, it consists in exterior acts which are ordained to the interior ones" (IIa, IIae, Q. 81, Art. 7).

It goes without saying that the exercise of the theological virtues which constitutes the spiritual life, the "*rationabile obsequium*" mentioned by Saint Paul (Rom. 12, 1), is not primary with respect to the sacramental rite of transubstantiation, as though the latter were ordained to it. The opposition of interior spirit to exterior action, here pointed out by Saint Thomas, does not apply to Christ or to the faithful or involve their respective roles, but merely refers to the essence of the relationship between the inner and outer expressions of religion.

213. Pius XI, Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor*.

214. "Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours. . . For whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee . . . we thy servants, and likewise Thy holy people . . . offer thee . . . a pure Victim . . .," etc.

"But the faithful are truly consecrated . . . not in the manner of completely passive terms which receive action and do not react . . . but in the manner of members who form only one, mystically, with Him Who consecrates" (Mersch, op. cit., p. 156).

The liturgical rites express this participation well: the drop of water with the wine in the chalice; the practice of offering bread and wine, which continues in the substitute practice of taking up a collection or giving Mass stipends.

215. *Mediator Dei*, page 33. "The faithful . . . relative to the official priesthood are passive; they do not give, they receive; they do not consecrate, they are consecrated" (Mersch, op. cit., page 150).

We here resume, in order to complete it, the discussion of the baptismal character. "The Church in all of her being, all of her elements, is imbued with the sacerdotal power of Christ, . . . Who invests her, consecrates her and makes her fit to prolong validly throughout the course of centuries the public worship celebrated by Christ. . . . But in a portion of her being . . . in those of her children who receive the power of Holy Orders, she is consecrated . . . to perform, as an instrument in the hands of

Christ, the eminent acts of Christian worship. . . . Thus, above the power of worship conferred by the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and of itself common to all of the faithful, there exists an hierarchical power to worship conferred by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. (That) power . . . enables those who possess it validly to dispense most of the Sacraments (excepting Matrimony) and to . . . render the Sacraments corporally present at every instant of time" (Journet, op. cit., page 118).

216. *Mediator Dei*, page 35.

217. *Mediator Dei*, page 35. The encyclical is here speaking on the plan of validity of the Mass. But it requests, on the contrary, that the faithful "be present, very numerous and very fervent" at the Holy Sacrifice and develop that wish at length.

218. Roman Breviary, *Preces and Missam, Feria sexta*.

219. *Mediator Dei*, page 36.

220. Heb. 9, 22.

221. Offertory of the Mass.

222. Heb. 7, 25.

223. I Cor. 5, 1.

224. Journet, op. cit., p. 79.

225. Office of the Nativity, Matins.

226. *Magnificat*, Verse 4.

227. "Have confidence, for I have overcome the world" (John 16, 33).

228. Matt. 17, 20.

229. *Summa Theol.*, Suppl. Qu. 3, a, 1, ad 3 m.

230. Cod. Jur. Can. c. 124.

231. Decree, Dist. 88, can. 8.

232. John 17, 19.

233. We know how difficult it is to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice slowly and recollectedly in churches that are so small they need as many Masses as possible on Sundays. Nevertheless we would like to draw the attention of the clergy and Our faithful, whose outward discipline and demeanor are very important, to their complementary duty of organizing things efficiently and being wholly obedient in this especially sacred realm. We are convinced that especially on week days, real improvement can be made with a little goodwill on the part of everyone (by distributing the Masses between the various altars, etc.) so that the celebrant, even when he has to distribute Holy Communion, can take the time necessary to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice devoutly and fervently.

234. The Code of Canon Law, Canons 125-126—bids the Ordina-



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watch over the faithfulness of the priests in the exercise of the spiritual practices just dealt with.

235. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, p. 24.
236. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, p. 39.
237. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, p. 41.
238. Cf. Heb. 5, 2; 7, 28.
239. Bede the Venerable, *Expositio* Saint Gabriel, Lesson VI.
240. Heb. V, 1.
241. Matt. 20, 27; John 13, 14-15; Cor. 4, 5.
242. Matt. 6, 20.
243. Matt. 13, 46.
244. 2 Cor. 6, 10.
245. Saint Gregory, Homel. 13 in Evang. Roman Breviary, Common for non-pontiff confessor, Lesson 8.
246. John 4, 24.
247. Ephes. 5, 25-33.
248. Saint Cyprianus, Ep. 69, 8.
249. Apost. Canon 39, 2.
250. *Cooperatores ordinis nostri* Pontifical, Ordination of the Priest).
251. Gregory of Nyse (Ord. in pt. Christi, P. G. XLVI, 581).
252. I Cor. 4, 1.
253. Which was made in respect to Christ by some sects whom Saint John refuted. They said Christ was a "phantom" who only seemed to be a man. Hence these people were called "Docetists" (from the Greek: to appear, to seem).
254. Pontifical, Ordination of Priests; preliminary exhortation.
255. This figure comes from statistics compiled several years ago, which could be revised at the earliest opportunity.
256. Rom. 10, 14.
257. The reader is here again referred to the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* in which the two "social sacraments" of the Church are shown to be akin to one another.

258. The search for a spirituality of the diocesan clergy has in recent years given rise to a series of essays based on the methodical investigation made by Msgr. Guerry at the request of the Cardinals and Archbishops of France, on "the nature and spirituality of the diocesan clergy." Other essays have been made along the same lines but starting from different viewpoints and problems. Without anticipating judgments on conclusions which theologians must now weigh impartially, it is possible to see good effects already in the practical aspects of pastoral life, traceable to that clarification of the possibilities and needs of the diocesan clergy.

It is comforting to us to note that both the regular clergy and the secular clergy have already derived a mutual profit from such loyal and fraternal contacts which, We are convinced, can but go on increasing. In any case, We owe it to truth and gratitude here to acknowledge the benefit which the diocese of Paris draws from such close cooperation.

259. Luke I, 28-29.
260. Is. 53, 5.
261. Pontifical. Ordination of subdeacons, deacons and priests.
262. Matt. 17, 6.
263. Luke 9, 8.
264. Luke 9, 54.
265. Luke 9, 55.
266. Jer. I, 10.
267. Matt. 26, 53.
268. Matt. 10, 34.
269. Ordinary of the Mass, Prayer before Communion.
270. Ephes. 2, 3.
271. Rom. 8, 15; 8, 23; Ephes. 1, 5.
272. Prayer for the Dedication of a Church.
273. I Cor. 15, 45.
274. Is. 21, 11.
275. Is. 62, 6.
276. Phil. 4, 13.

**Editor's Note:** In most cases quotations have been taken from standard English translations of encyclicals and theological works where these were available. Nearly all biblical references come from the Knox edition.



## THE MEANING OF GOD

"Godlessness" is an adjective that has been used loosely to cover any condition from adultery to subscribing to the wrong political party. When Cardinal Suhard described modern society as godless in his 1948 pastoral he used the term in its precise and terrible sense. Then he went on to define lucidly and movingly the God Who has revealed Himself to us. All this is contained in "The Meaning of God."

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